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LIFE OF RICHARD WAGNER:

BY

WM. ASHTON ELLIS

VOL V.

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N.B.—In all probability volume vi will cover the next six to nine years of Wagner's life.

W. A. E.

Horsted Keynes,

Easter 1906.

PHILHARMONIC
BREAK.

I

"A FAUST-OVERTURE."

A Faust's life-weariness.—Zurich String-quartet; Beethoven's op. 131.—*Carolyszt's* Rheingold "*indiscretion*" *and* "*Schumann*" *articles; Cornelius translator.—Resuscitation of an earlier overture: Faust in solitude, no Gretchen. Bülow's analysis. Thematic details; problems of the revision. The* "*tone-poem*" *conducted at Zurich; its reception elsewhere.*

Und so ist mir das Dasein eine Last,
*Der Tod erwünscht, das Leben mir verhasst.**
GOETHE'S *Faust.*

THE motto chosen for his revised FAUST-overture exactly pictures Wagner's mood when entering the year 1855. Last November he had written Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein: † "It really is too sad that I should have to live in this desert, cut off from you and Liszt. Whatever you may say enjoining patience, and however many grievances may weigh upon yourselves, neither do you experience nor can you form a notion of the killing solitude to which I am condemned . . . True, I have been pottering away at the 'Walküre,' but it goes much slower than I thought at first. What I draft in the end is certainly the best that lies within my power; only, with my desolate life, the moods for work come ever rarer. So long as I wrote books and turned out verses, things might go: for music

* "And so my whole existence is awry, life hateful, and my one desire to die."

† From a group of nine letters published in the *Bayreuther Blätter* July 1905; a kind of supplement to the *Wagner-Liszt Correspondence*. This one begins with thanks for kindness shewn to Minna at the Altenburg in October (see vol. iv, 339 *et seq.*).—In the case of various allusions in the text above I have to assume the reader's familiarity with my Introduction to the letters of *Richard Wagner to Mathilde Wesendonck*, published (H. Grevel & Co., London) in the interval between this volume and vol. iv.

I need another life, need music itself; whereas I now resemble someone who would make a fire and has the spark, indeed, but lacks the wood. Moreover, the subject of the Walküre affects me far too painfully: there really is no suffering in all the world that does not find its painfulest expression here, and the artistic simulation of these griefs takes its revenge upon myself: it has frequently made me so ill, already, that I had to suspend my work entirely. I am in the second act now, where Brünnhilde approaches Siegmund to announce his death; one scarce can call a thing like that composing! . . . I hope for nothing more —except the Flying Dutchman's goal. Whatever else of good may yet occur to me, I shall accept as a viaticum upon that journey . . . So—without hope, but with a heart full of thanks and affection—I bid you farewell for to-day. Fare you well, and rest assured that you are *not* unhappy; you may believe that on my word of honour"—meaning that the princess was at least under the same roof with the man she loved: whereas himself—but this is his own secret—he durst not even love.* So, shadowing forth his project of a *Tristan und Isolde* one month later, he exclaimed to Liszt: "With the black flag that floats at its end I shall shroud myself to die." Schopenhauer had taught him the evils of the Will-to-life, and his own racked heart had come to feel the absolute necessity of mute renunciation. In every way he was attuned to the subject of this much earlier overture; but before we follow him to its revision, we must pick up a few loose threads left floating at the close of volume iv.

Amid work at the first two members of the *Ring*, small as the opportunity was to hear good music, Wagner had done his utmost to increase it. Winter 1853-4 we found him largely occupied with Gluck and Beethoven for the Zurich orchestral union; in the London *Musical World* of Dec. 2, 1854, we find a Zurich correspondent writing: "The following operas have been produced in the course of a month: *Die Zigeunerin*, *Lucia*, *Martha*, *Stradella*, *Der Freischütz*, *Die Entführung*, *La Sonnambula* and *Otello*. *Die Entführung* was repeated at the especial request of Herr R. Wagner, who is, at present, stopping here. *Tannhäuser*

---

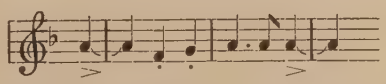
* See also his letter of Jan. 16, '54, to the same lady: "You have sacrificed everything to love:—abide by that:—never sacrifice the possibility of love itself! *I* have a right to preach to you—believe me—I *have!*" (*ibidem*).

is in rehearsal, and will be performed towards the end of this month." It is a little curious that this testimony to Wagner's fondness for Mozart should have been forgotten by the selfsame journal so very soon thereafter, but for the present our chief interest in the repetition of Mozart's singspiel "at the especial request of Herr R. Wagner" lies rather in its suggesting the devotion of a portion of his precious time, once more, to the improvement of performers at the Zurich theatre.

In another direction we have positive proof alike of his incentive and his generous tuition. For the first time in that city's annals a permanent string-quartet had been formed at Zurich in 1853, its members W. Heisterhagen, H. Honegger, A. Bauer and A. Schleich (the first and last names occur in a letter of Frau Wesendonck's just ten years later), and its performances had been introduced to local notice with the following public intimation signed by Wagner:—

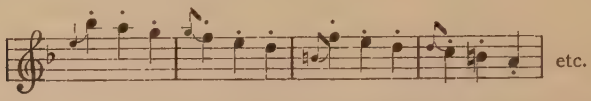
It would be agreeable to me to be able to contribute as much toward recommendation of the proposed Quartet performances as I have already succeeded in doing toward instigation of the enterprise itself. If I can attain that end by promising a continuance of my personal advice as to choice and artistic rendering of the masterworks to be performed, I do not hesitate to give the public that pledge herewith, just as the artists themselves have already received it from me at their wish.

The enterprise may even have left a lasting mark upon its prompter's own great work, since it is by no means improbable that the Heisterhagen combination was being coached in Schubert's "posthumous" quartet in D minor at the very time Wagner was leading his Wotan down to Nibelheim—thus accounting for the notorious similarity of the "Nibelungen" or "Hammer" motive to the commencement of Schubert's scherzo:



That the said motive (*Rheingold* etc.) is in fact an echo from this scherzo, there can be very little doubt when we travel a few bars farther down the latter and alight on the following, the resemblance of which to Mime's "zullendes Kind" on the one side, and to his so-called Cringing (exulting?) motive on the

other, will be recognised at once—though this second morsel must have lain in bond much longer, for not until late in 1856 was the *Siegfried* music begun :—



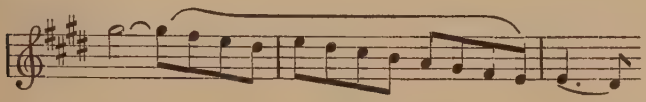
If Wagner's personal concernment with Schubert's best-renowned quartet be pure conjecture, it is quite otherwise with Beethoven's op. 131. Herr Steiner has reproduced the programme of a "Fourth Quartett-Soirée" at the Saale zur Meise, Zurich, Dec. 12, 1854, consisting of Haydn's quartet in G no. 55, Mozart's in B no. 3, and Beethoven's C sharp minor. To the announcement of the work last-named a note is added :—

At my particular wish the executants have submitted to the very arduous practice of this difficult quartet from the last period of Beethoven's life, a work still decried by many musicians and connoisseurs as unintelligible, and quite certainly delivered unintelligibly by most of them. It might accordingly seem venturesome to present such a piece to an assembly little accustomed to this class of music, and undisguisedly more partial to the easy of comprehension than the deeply felt ; nevertheless the happy outcome of our prolonged study encourages me not to withhold my assent to a public performance. The more reason do I see, however, for drawing the attention of the audience to the great idiosyncrasy of this unusual work, since I feel confident that its coming execution will bring it to the understanding of all who are able to follow the tone-poet through the protean phases of his inner life—from the sombre morning orison of a deeply suffering soul, past visions of the graceful, the seductive and enrapturing, through emotions of delight, of ecstasy, of yearning, love and self-surrender, exploding at last in mirth itself, in playful jest, until it ends with saddest resignation of all happiness on earth.

RICHARD WAGNER.

With the merest verbal variation and a delimitation of the several movements, this singularly prophetic sketch is also to be found among the "posthumous" jottings of the Zurich period (*P.* VIII. 386). So firmly rooted, moreover, was Beethoven's op. 131 in its apostle's affections, that just fifteen years after the Zurich soirée we find a whole page of his essay on *Conducting* devoted to the proper phrasing of the transition from one of its movements to another (*P.* IV. 323) ; whilst a year from that,

again, the *Beethoven* essay allots two pages to a lengthier programme, under the title "A day from Beethoven's inmost life" (*P.* V. 96-98). There Wagner speaks of "love's transport" as one of the emotions depicted in the final Allegro; we recognise it for the label generally assigned to a motive which makes its first Wagnerian bow in *Siegfried*, and behold the prototype in this Allegro:



If that correspondence adds probability to my assumption anent the Schubert parallel, on the other hand there is something to be learnt from the slight variance in Wagner's conception of the close of Beethoven's quartet at two such different epochs. In 1854 it is the "saddest resignation of all happiness on earth" or "most sorrowful renunciation" (Posthuma—forecasting 1861): in 1870 "he smiles at himself, for to him this sorcery was the merest play; and night beckons him, his day is done." Surely the later is the more complete interpretation, raising the whole work to a higher level and giving it dramatic climax; but personally in the middle 'fifties Wagner had learnt alone the "sorrowful," not yet the "smiling" side of true renunciation. His Wanderer has strange glimpses of it, certainly,—not the Wotan of *Die Walküre.*

As the days and hours spent on initiating others into the mysteries of Beethoven's op. 131 had served as strengthening interruption to our hero's own labours of composition, so a fortnight after their completion we see him conduct the *Eroica* again at a concert of the Zurich Panharmonic, Jan. 9, '55, his first public appearance since last winter. Almost simultaneously he must have received what I can only describe as a douche of cold water, in the shape of Carolyszt's miniature essay professing to discuss *Das Rheingold.* As this was the last occasion when Liszt put his name to any article on Wagner or his works, I must be excused if I deal with it at somewhat greater length than is called for by the thing's intrinsic merits.

When Wagner wrote that famous letter to Liszt of mid-December 1854 with its twofold reference to Schopenhauer and *Tristan*, he

also made enquiry as to an autograph score he had lent his friend "for a provisional four weeks" quite two months back: "If you have had enough of *Rheingold*, please send it to Chorus-master Fischer, Dresden; perhaps you would also ask him to hand it to the copyist, Wölfel, for completion of the transcript he had already begun.—Your hurrah for the Rhinegold was splendid—has it really turned out well, then? I only hope there's enough counterpoint for Raff in it: a point that sorely exercises me!" Apart from the quip about Raff—who had lately emitted a semi-hostile treatise on *Die Wagnerfrage*—the "Zuruf wegen des *Rheingoldes*" is by no means unambiguous, but appears to denote some terse congratulation either brought by Minna on her return from Weimar or conveyed by Princess Wittgenstein in a letter of her own (which seems to have formed the incentive to this no. 168); for, as observed last volume, we possess no dated letter of Liszt's to Wagner between the end of July '54 and the 1st of January 1855, and none at all in which he ventures an opinion on the *Rheingold* music.* Perhaps Liszt was preparing a little surprise for his friend, and merely sent the simple *Zuruf* to whet his appetite? At anyrate Brendel—who had begged Liszt in November for a New Year's article—is informed Dec. 1, '54, "Though it is very difficult for me to find time for the more necessary, I gladly place myself at your service with a brief article on Wagner's Rheingold for your specimen-number. I had arranged the article to suit the New Year number—you shall have it in four or five days. Dispose of it as best meets your convenience."

That Wagner himself had not been consulted, is clear from Liszt's smiling apology on the very day of publication: "In the first place, dearest friend, I want to welcome you into this new year 55: may it turn out better for us than its predecessors!—I have allowed myself a little indiscretion in Brendel's journal, and had a few columns about your Rheingold printed for the specimen-number (this paper having got a new publisher) as well as for the New Year's issue. I hope you will not be cross with me about it. I meant well, and it can do no harm for Sir Public to be made a little more attentive to the thing. The score I shall send to Fischer at Dresden in a few days' time, according to your instructions."

* It will be remembered that the presentation copy of the Ring-poem itself had elicited no actual judgment of his own (see vol. iv, 80).

"Indiscretion" really is the only word for it, and only on the assumption that Liszt had temporarily fallen out of touch with his friend, can one understand his having committed it. Even if he had forgotten Wagner's message to him of August '53, "How I regret having ever had the poem printed! It shall not be bandied to and fro like this: it still is *mine*" (iv, 79), he had but to turn to his complimentary copy of that poem, to be reminded at once by its preface that public discussion was a breach of the express conditions on which its author had distributed copies to his private friends (*ibid.* 71-2): a fortiori the coveted loan of its first instalment of manuscript music should have been deemed a trust so sacred as not even to be hinted in public without special sanction first obtained. Last August a simple editorial statement had appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift:* "To all friends of Wagner we are enabled to make the important announcement that the first night of the great 'Nibelungenring,' das Rheingold, is already finished," and that was all that could or should be said at present, without direct permission. One cannot, therefore, be astonished at Wagner's exclamation of the 19th Jan., "Your New Year's article gave me quite a shock," though he hastens to soften it with "Yet even here I soon perceived that I have really but to thank your growing sympathy again." The force of one or two mild criticisms, that follow, will be better appreciated when we have glanced at the Indiscretion itself.

In *F. Liszt's Gesammelte Schriften* the Rheingold-article fills barely six 8vo pages, as against the "Holländer's" round hundred (see vol. iv); consequently the "indiscretion" was truly small in one sense. The chief impression one derives from it, however, is that of empty bombast paired with frigid non-committal; there is no heart in the thing, no heart of woman or of man. Its opening quarter toys with platitudes on the arbitrary significance attached to the first day of the calendar; its middle section takes us, of course through a neat transition, to "the edifice with four porticos, the 'Ring des Nibelungen,' that is growing beneath the hands of its genius . . . the style of which you will find perhaps too lofty, the plan too gigantic, the ornament too ample—though you will be bound to admit that it is the most grandiose (*grossartigste*) among existing monuments." This strange system of hedging is continued throughout: "One of the four pillared halls is completed already; *Das Rheingold* unfolds its imposing lines beneath

the clear blue sky of Germany [where?]. What does this work contain?" — a question first answered by reference to the "chiselled epic of that cathedral . . . all the hieroglyphs on that Egyptian obelisk," the reader being supposed to have such trifles always handy. Surfeited with figures of speech, he is next vouchsafed a tantalising peep into the plot, just enough to let him bear away the idea of the *Rheingold* Wotan as "a sorrowing victim on a throne, compelled to reign and yearning but for love"! But stay: it is scarcely a peep into the plot, merely a thumb-nail sketch of its principal characters,* snapped off against another question, "And what emotions do the characters instil in us?"

As that question has brusquely brought us to the closing third, we are all agog for revelation of Liszt's mature opinion, formulated after several weeks' study of the score. But mark how deftly it is shunned: "No one as yet can answer that correctly, even though poem and score lie before him; for no one yet has seen the building in the rays of the bright noonday sun, in which the filigree-work that twines around its shapes and shadows, its giant contours, will grow visible [at last?]. No one can describe it, since he does not know as yet the other sections of the edifice, and cannot yet attain a survey of their mutual relations and proportions." After this exasperating shuffle, we are quite prepared to be whisked off to a comparison between S. Peter's and the Pantheon, and doubled back to: "Opera, such as we know it, will appear transformed in Wagner's plan. Will it lose or gain thereby in beauty and effectiveness? *That's the question!*—If in the days of Adrian [etc.] . . . So we will not forecast the effect which this miracle of daring, this mightily-schemed architectural group, shall produce one day. We cherish the sincere conviction that when genius girds up all its forces for attainment of a goal, its exertions are never in vain, and even if it pursues the sought-for secret on devious paths (*Umwegen*) there will never lack of treasures to spring up beneath its summoning hands. Should we have been enriched by the thousand intellectual and

* I must absolve Carolyszt from the perversion of the names of Wagner's dramatis personæ presented in this article's 'collected' form (*F. L.'s Ges. Schr.* III. ii). In the *Neue Zeitschrift* they are rightly called Wodan (the original spelling), Fricka, Freia and Loge; but L. Ramann, true to her principle of betterment, transforms the last three into Frigga, Freya and Loki—five years after the first Bayreuth performance!

material interests which are knit for us with America, should we have victoriously embraced the earth's whole round, without Columbus's conviction that his path must lead to India's strand?"

Save for an apostrophe consisting of Schiller's brief ode to Columbus, "Steu're, muthige Segler" etc., the essay ends with that back-hander; than which nothing could have been more disconcerting to Wagner, for it is adapted from his *Opera and Drama* —"The error of Beethoven was that of Columbus, who intended to seek a new way to the long-known land of India, but discovered a new world instead" (*P.* II. 70-1). Whether Carolyszt intended it or not, combined with the *Umwegen* of the previous sentence it was tantamount to saying that the fundamental idea of this "mächtig angelegte architektonische Gruppe" was a mistake, so far as could be judged from the musical treatment of its first member. No wonder the unfortunate composer was so alarmed that he hardly knew how to reply. After his bounden assumption of Liszt's "growing sympathy," he could only find the following to continue with: "For the rest, when you represent my work as such a monster, I feel that you are confounding the standard: to my mind it is simply that our public art-affairs, the spirit of our means of representation etc., are utterly puny, whereas *my* work is just of decent human stature and seems gigantic merely when we try to squeeze it into those undignified proportions. If we ourselves proclaim our projects as eccentric and chimerical, we flatter the very good-for-nothingness of our accepted public art, and stamp it as of just and respectable measure after all.—We oughtn't to let these people think that."

With a Liszt whose susceptibilities had shewn themselves at their keenest of late (Berlin *Tannhäuser* affair), that would be about as much as it was safe to say; but it leaves us in no doubt that Wagner recognised the harmfulness of such a weak-kneed "indiscretion." Nor was he alone in his dissatisfaction with it. Since publication of my last volume there has appeared a collection of the letters of Cornelius, two fat books, interspersed with pages from his diary; by means of these we are for the first time let behind the scenes of his translation of the Carolysztian articles—an illuminating glimpse in many ways. Early in December 1854, Cornelius confides the following to his diary:—

"It is a splendid moonlight night, outside. It shines the brighter for a psychic thunderstorm that gathered in my soul at

eve, and now is over. I am cheerful in the best of senses.—[A few days appear to elapse here.]

"The storm, of which I spoke above, was thus. I went to the Altenburg with the translation of a New Year's article which Liszt has composed for Brendel's journal; it treats of the Rheingold by Wagner. I think I may admit to myself without conceit that I have had a little practice now; so I had looked the article a few times through, then translated it quite leisurely, and taken it with me. The princess sang my praises in contrast to Pohl, who was always so afraid of these long sentences (I also!), and to whom she had instanced my long phrases from the Tannhäuser. Then Liszt came, and we read the article a second time. When he had gone, tho', she started all over again for a third time, and turned everything topsy-turvy in a way to make me ill; each single word was tweaked and twisted. But when that was all done and she commenced at the beginning a fourth time, wanting to squeeze out still choicer nuances, I felt like going mad. As she insisted on another word for each recurrence of 'Vergangnes' ['past'], after we had exhausted 'Durchlebtes,' 'Dagewesnes' and so on, I said, Why not 'Passiertes'?—and she positively wrote it down (!) but soon added with her sweetest smile: Ah, perhaps you may find a still better expression—it really sounds rather prosaic. I was most indignant at that afternoon. If the thing were only sterling (*'was Rechtes*)! But it is nothing but phrasemongery, a mere exercise in the art of concealing one's thoughts.—When I remarked quite simply, that it would be apropos if Liszt delivered himself somewhat more exhaustively about the score (for the whole article is bolstered up with Architecture and the Monumental: 'Das Rheingold unfolds its severe majestic lines beneath the clear sky of Germany.' If an American savage read that, whatever would he think?!) she answered me: That is just what Liszt can not, for *he cannot praise it!* So, after working themselves into a nebulous deification, with the Lohengrin, they have already got the length of shrinking back in terror from the consequences? O how that invites to keep one's judgment calm and sane, delude oneself into nothing, and fight shy of the hot coppers of enthusiasm. To-day (a week later) I've been translating the first Schumann article. There again, by side of many a good idea one has rubbish like 'Faust will not contribute to an understanding of

the Wahlverwandtschaften—the *Méditations poétiques* afford no key to the Girondistes, the Marriage of Figaro stands in no relation to the Requiem' (!). Indeed it is an art, to spout such gabble with a serious face: *difficile est satiram non scribere.* And this eternal associating of Goethe with Hugo, Schiller with Lamartine—it's bitter for a wretched German!—But enough for to-day! It had to be put on paper for once, that I might remind myself some future time of all the piffle I had had to eat my way through. . . . Dec. 21. I have been very busy these last few days—but alas that I should have to say it!—with nothing but the odious translations for Liszt. That must be stopped, yet I can see no end to it if I remain here. . . . It is striking twelve; deep stillness of night. — I have translated the Schumann article no. 2." *

I think my promise, that this extract would prove illuminant in many ways, has been fulfilled. For one thing, it shews L. Ramann's error in assuming that Cornelius' translations had been thrown off in "a hurry that allowed of no file" (iv, 237), and her hardihood in attempting to improve them. The unhappy man had been nearly driven off his head with constant filing, not only of the "Rheingold" article, but of all the others he had to manipulate to keep his Weimar footing. He writes his mother Jan. 4, '55, "I have just finished a long piece of translating for Liszt again [the three "Robert Schumann" articles]. Then I shall have to translate a book of his on the Gipsies and their music in Hungary, which will probably be the last of that sort of thing. Although these labours have been waste of time, in any higher sense, at bottom they have been the means of enabling me to stay here, and I find acknowledgment on every hand as regards their execution; everybody who does not *know* they're translations, takes them for German originals. Moreover, it will do me no harm for my name to go hand-in-hand through the world with Liszt's." Of that honour L. Ramann has posthumously robbed him, and shorn the Carolysztian essays of their foremost charm, though Cornelius has left quite enough of his own to sustain him on *his own* feet through the world.

In another direction we have a key to the futility of a number

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* *Peter Cornelius: Ausgewählte Briefe etc.*, vol. I. published end of 1904, vol. II. early 1905, Breitkopf and Haertel.

of the articles themselves: everything is sacrificed to "phrase-mongery," and that at least Liszt leaves to Carolyne, who certainly in this instance converts it into "an exercise in the art of concealing one's thoughts" or haply one's ignorance of the special subject. One sets out with the professed intention of discussing a musical drama, and, incapable of reading its score, one *has* to prate about S. Peter's in Rome and Egyptian obelisks instead,—for it would be grotesque to suppose that Liszt had any finger in this pie. All he can possibly have contributed to it, must have been a general instruction to the princess to serve up something suitable for New Year's fare with decorations *à la* "Rheingold."

As for "Liszt cannot praise the score," though Cornelius seems to be writing a week later than the interview and we therefore need not pin the princess to those actual words, is not their sense writ large upon the article itself? If Liszt had been imbued with the same enthusiasm for the *Rheingold* score as for that of *Lohengrin*, or as Bülow had expressed to him already (iv, 391), is it for a moment to be imagined that he would have dismissed it with a halting question? Even though he might rightly feel compunction about reviewing a work merely lent for his private perusal, he would surely have directed his collaboratrix to attest his admiration in no doubtful terms. Quite possibly he was disappointed with the *Rheingold* music at first sight, but it is more charitable to his foresight to assume that he "could not praise it" for the simple reason that he had not studied it as yet; an assumption supported by the fact of his still detaining it for another two to three months despite its author's anxiety to get a spare copy made at Dresden. Whichever way, it was an unsatisfactory basis for a would-be friendly act, and it is lucky that the victim happened to be in an extremely forbearing frame of mind when he received the Indiscretion.

A like forbearance could scarcely be expected of a second victim, and this fatal mania of Princess Wittgenstein's for parading Liszt's name at the foot of articles which ought never to have been written, or to have been written by an expert in fact and tact, seems to have gained him a lifelong enemy. Long has it been a mystery to the historian, why the Schumann party of a sudden turned its back on Liszt, who had previously done all he could to popularise

that composer's music: the "Schumann" articles just mentioned by Cornelius dispel that mystery, to my mind, and as the said hostility was soon extended to Liszt's greater friend I do not think it out of place in a biography of Wagner to devote a page or two to this forgotten cause.*

It was thus. Early in 1854 Robert Schumann had finally lost his reason, and his wife was compelled soon afterwards to earn her own support and that of their children by a series of concert-tours—ultimately resulting in attainment of an artistic position without a serious rival of her own sex and with very few of the opposite. Towards the end of October '54, just after her renewed début at the Gewandhaus, Leipzig, Liszt most kindly arranged that she should play to the Weimar court and also at a concert consisting entirely of her husband's compositions, including the great Pfte-concerto in A minor. Unfortunately she had a very empty house on the latter occasion (Oct. 27), as we gather from a little set of farewell verses by Cornelius, in which she is ranked with Liszt and Joachim. Then Cornelius confides to his November diary: "I am to make another translation for Liszt, about Clara Schumann; I almost think my poem has been the incentive, in some sort, to this article of his.—I won't deny that it was most annoying to me, with my toothache, to have these extravagant phrases drummed into me by the princess with full declamatory pathos; so possessed is she with her own (?) product that, while her right hand holds the brouillon, she gesticulates continually with her left. After each half-sentence, too, she takes a look at you, and once in thrice, of course, that demands your looking toward her in return; which I did with a physiognomy of toothache unconcealed. Here we have all those flashy French expressions which constitute the seasoning of these essays, *diapré*, *portée*, *trempe*, etc.; *flammêche* alone is new, and an extra-high-falutin' German synonym is asked for that.—— "

Cornelius's "(?)" confirms our own suspicions of the "Clara Schumann" sketch's authorship; but naturally the victim, when she read it in the *Neue Zeitschrift* of Dec. 1, had no idea that

* Though always shy of Wagner's advances, Schumann himself had never actually opposed him, and was now beyond all possibility of doing so; whereas it was not till 1869 that Wagner wrote a word against Schumann's latest style of music (*Judaism*, 2nd ed., and *Conducting*).

Liszt was not responsible for every syllable, and one can conceive she would gladly have sacrificed all the flowery encomiums on her wedded life and earlier career as artist, to be spared the following indiscretion toward the essay's close: "Remarks have frequently been made on the conscientiousness with which Frau Schumann prepares for a public appearance; how she examines the whole keyboard, tests each note to see not only if it is in proper tune, but if it gives the wished-for resonance and colour; what care she bestows on her seat's not being the least degree too high or low; how she not only practises for hours upon the pianoforte which she is to use . . . but does so in the concert-hall itself, if possible, just to hear how its acoustics answer to each chord, arpeggio, diminuendo or crescendo." Seeing that Clara Schumann had but recently returned to the platform after a retirement of years, we may be permitted to doubt the "frequency" of such remarks, in any public sense, and to view them as a spice of tittle-tattle, an uncalled-for revelation of professional secrets. What makes them jar so, is the half-patronising apology with which they are clumsily followed: "For ourselves we can only perceive therein a necessity of her nature, a consequence of her method, of her conception of art and the artist's difficulty in keeping faith with his vocation, which does not allow her to trust to the inspiration of the moment," etc. It is not so much what is said, as the chilly manner of its saying, that leaves one dissatisfied: one feels that a sterling artist and sorrow-burdened wife is being slyly quizzed as a meticulous plodder. Here every word ought to have been an appeal from heart to heart, not a High-school certificate of merit winding up with this tag: "Clara Schumann is no pianist and concert-giver in the ordinary sense of the term. Her talent seems to us a personification of [her husband's] secular oratorio, a Peri that yearns towards her Paradise in constant mystic contemplation of the sublime, the beautiful, the ideal." For mere sake of a trope, again, the luckless Peri is left *outside* the Paradise for which she "mystically yearns." All very well meant, no doubt, but a woeful indiscretion of the spouting head.

No: I do not suggest that these mental reservations as regards her talent were sufficient reason for more than a degree of coolness between Frau Schumann and the signer of her unsought testimonial, but they were followed up next March and April by that series of three articles upon her husband, translation whereof

we have just heard young Cornelius stigmatise as "waste of time." Here in truth is a prize specimen of the "art of concealing one's thoughts"—of smothering them in ells of verbiage.* Out of eighty pages, reckoned in the book form, about ten are assigned to a passable consideration of Schumann the journalist and critic; about another ten to avoidance of any real appreciation of Schumann the musician; and the remainder—i.e. three quarters of the whole!—to gaseous generalisations on art-criticism and musical progress, with the usual encyclopedia Carolinica. Pardon for the said avoidance is lamely begged at the beginning, on the score that "not until the master's latest works have been published, will it be possible to say if they evince continual progress on the path he chose in fiery youth . . . to decide whether he truly belonged, or no, to the category in which one had classed him for the nonce"; a formula reiterated in varying words from time to time, till it brings the long-spun essay to a finis thus: "In this discussion of Schumann and his important merits (*bedeutenden Vorzüge*), so far as their scope is adequately to be judged to-day, much else has had to be passed over, for which the honour and recognition due him will have to be expressed some future time. But his career, as said above, is not to be considered yet as ended. Let us hope he will soon resume his interrupted labours, and dower art with many another work. No one could wish it more ardently and keenly than ourselves, who have always paid him sincere admiration and friendly reverence." †

* This is merely measuring Carolyszt by a standard set up in these articles themselves, where a point is made, whether rightly or wrongly, of Schumann's "careful choice of expressions when characterising certain individuals; whereby—though saying nothing but the truth—with a diplomacy not only permissible, but even indispensable to the journalist, he often rather lets one guess the *whole* truth, than speaks it out. Only an attentive reader of his four volumes [of reprints] can recognise the virtuosity he practises in this regard, how copiously he strews his praises on some names, with what reserve he eulogises others; and so exactly does he mete his praise's quality, that one would prefer to belong to those whose excellences he acknowledges in brief but definitely higher terms, than to others whose merits he counts up diffusely and with a certain ceremony." So we are dealing with an author to whom the language of critical "diplomacy" was by no means an unknown tongue.

† The last clause ("who have" etc.) is omitted in the book edition (1882); if *that* was by Liszt's order, it would have been better to omit the whole.—N.B. The rest of the passage is also slightly altered there, to bring it 'up to date.'

No excuse for reticence could be weaker or worse-timed. Almost all of Schumann's works, early or late, were quite familiar to Liszt, and the manuscripts of the most important then-unpublished ones had been lent him by their author for performance. At the very time these articles were meandering through the *Neue Zeitschrift*, *Genoveva* was in rehearsal at Weimar (perfd April 9, '55); not a word is said of it. The beautiful *Manfred* music had been given at Weimar in 1852, and regretfully returning the MS. three months later (he had wished to keep it), Liszt had informed Schumann that "an exact copy" had been taken for that theatre; these articles dismiss it with the icy comment, "this composition will find a more attentive audience in the concert-hall than at the theatre, and therefore may be fitly adduced among those works of the author's which enrich the concert-programme." Frau Schumann herself had played the great A minor Concerto under Liszt's baton last October; it is passed in silence. The Quintet for pfte and strings was already famous far and wide; alike it and the other concerted chamber-music might never have existed, for all this essay cares. Similarly with the symphonies, the songs, the choral works (three lines apiece are devoted to their *poems*) and the larger pianoforte products. Imagine four pages given over to word-painting (Carolynian, for a ducat) of the genre works for that instrument, and nothing said of the Etudes Symphoniques or the Fantasia op. 17—though the latter had been dedicated to Liszt himself some fifteen years back, and then acknowledged by him for "a work of the highest order"! His biographer might have saved her astonishment at Frau Schumann's omitting that dedication from her later edition of the work, if she herself had searched for any mention of this masterpiece in the essay she eventually revised.

Clearly a free hand had been granted Princess Carolyne again, and if Liszt had really scanned her handiwork, perhaps he would have felt less surprise when he wrote her from Brunswick a few weeks after its appearance in print, "There was music this morning at Mme Schumann's, who received me in the most amiable manner in the world—but without saying a single word about the article in the *Neue Zeitschrift*." Naturally the poor lady could not be otherwise than civil to a caller, but the memory of that scuttled ship, launched from a harbour dug out by her husband himself, was bound to rankle in her loyal heart, and *we* need not

be surprised if we find Liszt writing Carolyne from Vienna, January 1856: "Tomorrow I am going to the concert of Mme Schumann, who has not accepted the proposal made to her to play at the *Mozart-Concert*" (to be conducted by him).

How much easier it would have been, not to pen such articles at all, not to say anything on subjects concerning which one was unprepared to publish unequivocal opinions! If eulogy of Robert Schumann was an urgent need at that particular moment, surely there were dozens of writers who would have been only too delighted to express their warm enthusiasm in the columns of his whilom journal. But that, alas! would not have suited Carolyne Wittgenstein's book. Nothing could satisfy her vicarious ambition, save constant elevation of Franz Liszt upon the stilts of her incessant phrasemongery; with a little superficial 'getting up,' she was ready to mystify you on any subject under the sun, regardless of consequences. Bitten with the cacoethes scribendi, one handle came as welcome to her as another: hence the "Schumann" articles with their halfpennyworth of bread to an intolerable deal of sack, and hence the "Rheingold" Indiscretion —with which, as the last in her and her figure-head's Wagner series, I gladly bid goodbye to 'Carolyszt.'

Wagner's mild expostulation anent the "Rheingold" article is preceded thus in his letter of Jan. 19, 55, to Liszt: "How famous, that you have finished your *Faust*;* you may imagine how eagerly I am looking forward to it. It's too bad of you, not to want to shew it me until so late; yet—if I cannot hear it properly conducted by you to begin with—at least I shan't despise making my first acquaintance with it through *yourself* at the piano. A living idea, such as you know how to give, isn't even remotely replaceable by anything else, and I set more and more value on obtaining the right impression from the first, so much do I mistrust acquaintance made through abstract notes. [One would be blind, not to catch the side-glance at his *Rheingold's* fate.]—

* Coupled with Liszt's intimation of Jan. 1: "I have completed my Faust-symphony (divided into 3 movements—Faust—Gretchen—and Mephistopheles) —and shall bring it to Zurich next summer," this remark of Wagner's settles the question of Liszt's previous silence toward him; Liszt had informed Rubinstein of that completion the 19th of last October (see vol. iv, 407*n*), and it is inconceivable that he should have written to Wagner without so much as mentioning it.

Ridiculously enough, I had just been seized, myself, with a positive craving to revise my old Faust-overture. I have written an entire new score, retouching the instrumentation throughout, altering sundry things completely, and giving somewhat more extension and importance to the middle (second motive). I am going to conduct it at a concert here a few days hence and call it 'A Faust-overture': motto," etc.

Yes, it was "old," this FAUST-overture, just fifteen years old, and for its early history I must refer the reader to vol. i, where he will find it was composed amid its author's first Parisian hardships. Only twice had he conducted it in its original form, namely at Dresden in 1844 (vol. ii, 72-3), when it was so poorly received that its composer seems to have lost all patience with it for many a year. At last his then new ally Liszt had asked for it, during the Weimar preparations for *Tannhäuser*, and Wagner sent it him Jan. 30, '49, with this remark: "I should have no reason at all for withholding it from you, excepting that it pleases me no longer; but I believe the sole consideration is, whether this overture will please yourself. Should the latter be the case, do as you like with my work; only I should wish to have the manuscript returned to me at your convenience."

We do not hear whether the overture pleased Liszt just then or not, but its manuscript remained in his hands, apparently unused, until May '52, when at last it was performed in Weimar, and Liszt reports that "it went well and made a sensation."* This seems to have given a fillip to Wagner's interest in the work, for he replies May 29: "I had heard nothing about your performance of the Faust-overture, barring your own brief remark. I cannot look unkindly on this composition, although there are various details in it that would never flow from my present pen: in particular, the still rather too plentiful brass is no longer to my mind. If I knew that Härtels would pay me something handsome for it, I should almost like to publish the full score and a pianoforte edition (which H[ans] would have to make); only I should want to be properly coaxed to it, as it is not the sort of thing I'm anxious to embark on of my own initiative."

I have already pointed out how much more restive Wagner's

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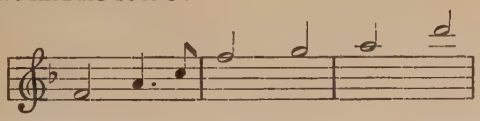
* See vol. iii, 338.—May 19, 53, enquiring if Wagner has revised it yet, Liszt observes, "We have given it once or twice here, fairly well."

ear had grown toward "too plentiful brass" since the days of *Rienzi*, the original *Holländer*, and this first version of the FAUST overture; it is further noticeable that he speaks of a work he had not seen for a full three years as if its manuscript lay spread before him, so vivid is his memory of it, yet his letter concludes with "I shall have to beg you for the score of my Faust-overture, as I possess no sort of copy." As seen in that later *Rheingold* case, Liszt suffered from a not uncommon slackness in returning MS. lent him, so that Wagner has to remind him again next September: "Do be so good as to send me two things: I. My *Faust-overture* (no doubt you've had a transcript made in case you still require it). I feel tempted to retouch it a little, and publish it through H[ärtels]—perhaps also obtain a fee for it. B[ülow] would have to do the pianoforte arrangements then, as he promised me before. II. My guide to the performance of *Lohengrin*, which I sent you by letter from Thun in summer 1850." Left in uncertainty for three weeks longer, he asks again Oct. 3, '52: "You are not forgetting the Faust-overture and the drawings for Lohengrin* I asked you for?" To which Liszt replies by return: "You will receive your Faust-overture by to-day's post; there is a copy of it here, and I shall probably have it performed again this winter. This work is altogether worthy of you—yet, if you will permit me to make a remark, I cannot conceal that either a second middle section (at letter E or F†) or a more restful treatment and daintier colouring of the present middle section



would be welcome to me.—Here the wind is a little too massive, and—forgive me for saying it—I consider the motive in F major inadequate; it lacks *grace*, in a measure, and forms a sort of hybrid, neither fish nor flesh, which stands in no true relation or contrast to what goes before and follows after, and consequently blocks the interest. If you introduced in its place a

* These and the directions for performance seem to have never been recovered, as they had "gone the round of the Weimar theatre"; see iii, 505.

† The *lettering* of the original score must surely have been much wider-spaced than that of the revision (present partitur).

suave and tenderly melodious section, modulated Gretchen-wise, I believe I may assure you your work would gain very much.—Think it over, and don't be cross with me if I have been talking nonsense."

Liszt's suggestion is of interest, as shewing the different standpoints from which two advanced musicians may regard the same subject; for Wagner certainly did *not* adopt it, though he ultimately altered his "middle section" in another way. But it is hardly ever one's friendly counsellors can tell one *how* to fill a chink they may have espied; when they want you to introduce Gretchen, it generally turns out that you feel bound, instead, to give a shade more individuality to Faust. So, after a month's interval, Wagner answers his friend: "I want to write to you about the Faust-overture. How splendidly you have caught me tripping when I tried to gammon myself into having written an 'Overture to Faust'! You have detected precisely what is lacking there: the lack is—Woman!—Perhaps, however, you would soon understand my tone-poem if I called it 'Faust in solitude.'—At that time I meant to write a whole Faust-symphony; the first movement (that completed) was just this 'solitary Faust'—in his yearning, despairing and cursing. The 'Womanly' hovers before him as nothing but a counterfeit of his desire, not in its own divine reality; and it is just this insufficient image of his longing, that he smashes in despair. Not until the second movement, was Gretchen—Woman—to appear; I already had a theme for her—but merely a theme—: the whole thing remained where it was—I wrote my 'Flying Dutchman.'—There you have the entire explanation.—So if a last grain of foolish vanity forbids my allowing this Faust-composition to moulder quite away, I certainly shall have to work it up a bit, but only in its instrumental modulation; it is impossible to introduce the theme you wish now: that would mean my turning the thing into an entirely new composition, for which I have no fancy. If I publish it, however, I shall call it rightly 'Faust in solitude,' or 'The solitary Faust'—a tone-poem for orchestra."

Far from a mere parrying of a comrade's objections, this assertion as to the work's first destination had been *published* just a year before: "Out of the depth of my inner uncontent . . I made a hasty sketch, and as hasty composition, of an orchestral piece which I called an 'Overture to Goethe's Faust,' but which

was strictly meant to constitute the first movement of a grand Faust-symphony" (*Communication*).* It is repeated to Uhlig Nov. 27, '52, together with a remark upon Liszt's perspicacity, a vindication of the description "tone-poem, in this instance," and a more definite statement that "Gretchen was to have formed the subject of the symphony's second movement, as Faust of its first"—thus anticipating Liszt's design by many a year, even if that design itself was not suggested by the words in our last paragraph.

In the interval between these letters of Nov. '52 to Liszt and Uhlig the Härtels had written so self-pityingly about the prospects of *Lohengrin*, that Wagner "withdrew his offer" (see letter to U. mid-Nov.); yet Liszt tells him Dec. 27: "I am glad to find my comments on your Faust-overture do not displease you. To my way of thinking, the work would gain still further by a *lengthening* or two.—Härtel will be glad to undertake the printing, and if you would like to gratify myself, present me with the manuscript as soon as the engraver has done with it; this overture had lain so long with me, and I have taken quite a fancy to it! However, if you have already disposed of it otherwise, never mind me, but make me a present of another manuscript some other day."

The latter part of Liszt's petition soon was granted, Jan. '53 in fact (vol. iv, 290), but the FAUST overture fell back to limbo for two years more; and what with Uhlig's death, the private issue of the Ring-poem, and then the setting of its first two parts, we need not wonder at it—especially as there had been no hint that Härtels would vouchsafe a *fee*. What is more remarkable, is that this overture should suddenly crop up again without apparent outer incitation; not a word had been breathed on it in any letter prior to that with which we commenced our inquiry, viz. of Jan. 19, '55, to Liszt, when the last stroke of the revision was already two days old. Of inner incitation, on the other hand, there was enough and to spare. Consider Wotan's farewell to Brünnhilde, immortalised in tones the end of last December; consider the interpretation of Beethoven's op. 131 and the engrossment with the philosophy of Pessimism; finally consider the composer's

* *Prose Works* I. 302-3. In the *Autobiographic Sketch* of nine years earlier (i.e. three years after the composition itself) the subject is dismissed in a brief clause, "In the same winter of 1839 to 1840, besides an overture to the first part of Goethe's Faust, I composed some French songs" etc. (*ibid.* 15).

own rebellion against the visions of a hopeless love—and you will see that this was the predestined moment for resumption of a "Faust in solitude," Beethoven and Wotan, Schopenhauer and Mathilde, blending into one supreme excitant cause.

And now for the work itself, to which we could have no better guide than Hans von Bülow's brilliant analysis, which has stood the test of half a century.* Near its beginning, he expresses a "hope that Franz Liszt's unique eloquence may find the leisure to captivate all hearts for *this* work of his friend's as well"; but there can be no question as to the superiority of Bülow's method to that of Carolyszt. Everything here is to the point, nothing smacks of padding or parade; enthusiasm, deep insight into form and substance, are presented in a style at once so caustic and so sane that products like the "Rheingold" article, compared with this, stand self-confessed as fustian. Gladly would I translate the whole, but that it would take up thirty of my pages; so I must rest content with extracts characteristic alike of the writer and his subject.

After outlining the composition's history, Bülow lays stress on the "A" in its title, shewing that "*A* Faust-overture" can never be intended as the musical exponent of "Goethe's six-act tragedy (first half)," and seizing the opportunity to crack a jest on "the traditional ingredients of such a monstrous attempt: a meaningless exordium, meant to set us on the alert—an unsteady jack-o'-lanterning, or jovially despairing, allegro theme (Faust)—a sentimentally 'German melodic' side-theme (Gretchen) — a couple of cranky modulations in the working-out, with a 'demonic' piccolo for finis (Mephistopheles). That was pretty much the classic recipe for a musical illustration of Goethe's most immense, and one of Man's sublimest thoughts. On a Faust night any man of taste was compelled to stroll into the theatre seven minutes late." So Bülow rightly warns us against connecting Wagner's FAUST with any special scene or scenes in Goethe's: "His work belongs to pure instrumental *lyrics;* wherefore let hearer and reader seek no dramatic truffles in its score. . . . It is no *character* sketch, but a painting of *mood;* a peculiarity it

* First published in the *Neue Zeitschrift* of August 1 and 8, 1856, then as a pamphlet in 1860, and finally incorporated in the volume of his *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Breitkopf and Härtel) 1896.

shares with Schumann's Manfred-overture," for which Bülow also proclaims his "personal admiration and sympathy," though he anticipates the verdict of posterity by ranking Wagner's as the greater work of art.

"Wagner's Faust-overture is a *Stimmungsbild*," he proceeds, "the artistically rounded exposition of a state of soul, or of the motive which leads thereto. Its subject is no dramatic hero, nor that which stamps the character of such, a *deed:* its subject is a *suffering;* no private suffering of a given Faust, but a suffering of universal-human scope. Not Goethe's Faust is its hero, then, but Humanity itself. Yet as the word-poet, proposing to paint a universal-human feeling, was bound to choose the only available means—its reflection in a definite individual—so the tone-poet was equally obliged to undertake a kindred individualisation . . to take the Faust mood up into himself and artistically give forth a purely subjective reflex of the universal. Name us an artist more elect for this by Fate, than him now fastened to the cross of exile! . . . Such an orchestral piece will naturally remain an ἅπαξ λεγόμενον [a thing said once for all], and its inner spring, the heart-compelling need which bade the poet fashion it, invests it with a consecration such as will never deck the works of those who trifle with the art of *luxury* (at bottom, animal of nature)."

Bülow goes on to say that this FAUST overture "has its roots in Beethoven's Ninth symphony"—by which, in fact, it was inspired in 1840, and the first theme whereof Wagner christened in 1846 with that "Entbehren sollst du, sollst entbehren" (Go wanting shalt thou, shalt go wanting) which in Goethe's *Faust* precedes the motto chosen for this overture. A long, but never ponderous discussion of the new field opened out to music by that symphony, the field of tone-*poetry*, leads up to Bülow's own interpretation of the poetic basis of this overture, which he prefaces with a disclaimer of "any pretence to set up an authoritative programme." Whether we unreservedly adopt it or no, this interpretation is so rich in suggestions that I must reproduce it wellnigh in full:—

"Its so-called Introduction bears the character of an 'exposition,' and contains the work itself *in nuce* . . . Here the poet invites us to his mental workshop, and shews us the dawn in which his chief idea awakes, as if from the unconsciousness of dreams, gradually to swell to that dæmonic might which celebrates

its suicidal triumph at the close in one last witching echo; *question* preponderates at first, and the final *affirmation* has to pass through many stages, more than one relapse. To ourselves, subjectively, it seems natural to read in this chief-motive from the first a pining for death, which bids the man betrayed by life, and weary of a fruitless struggle, to seek the only ransom he can gain. Doubt and indecision still restrain him from the means which proffers liberation from all torture, but opens up a greater question, whether flight to the threshold of Beyond may not become a bartering of Scylla for Charybdis; whether that Beyond may not reveal itself as one huge macrocosm of the selfsame sufferings, compared wherewith the fardels of this life would fade to a feeble miniature. Not long, however, can his fancy brood among the slag of fabled bugbears: a Faust is no man of pallid fear, the sudden wish to be-no-more no product of a moment's irk. Infinitudes of pain have been preparing it, eternities of suffering minutes nursed and fed it big; it is a result of the man's development, his whole experience, an accomplished fact, unalterable and irreversible as the motives which have given it its stamp. This cheerless certainty cannot take long before it drives conviction to the feeling whence it sprang; but the fatalistic force indwelling in it must first be tested by a fresh sore fight. For the moment it must hold its tongue, yield place to a free hearing of whatever haply might deny or rout it: a victory without opponent, by ruse or momentary stratagem, would be no triumph. All that still hath a semblance of survival and endurance in the individual must rear itself against that plea; if fear or timid doubt was an unworthy motive for a lofty nature, there yet are nobler ones that can pick up the gage. Let life, accordingly, be lived again in recollection, recapitulated. Many an alluring image skims before the inner eye, and memory lets the beauteous vision last perhaps an instant longer than past reality had fixed it; but the idealising dream, awake, cannot conceal how sombrely those shapes had been transmuted in the end.

"Fresh storms of grief at undeception, the mocking parody, the trivial recompense for many a dire experience, the rank overgrowth of thorns for such a meagre show of roses. Grief knows no measure and no limit now; if the wish for the End had sprung before from cold reflection, it is lashed now to its fiercest by the quickening of conscious feeling. Its might turns ruthless,

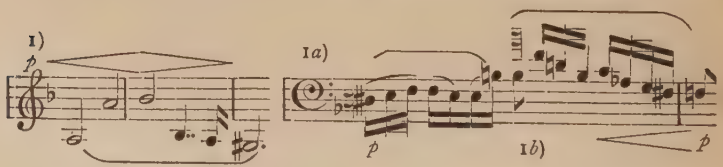
unrestrainable, inflamed by all just conjured up as counterpoise; the treacherous antidote goes over to its fancied foe. No longer can it be called a battle, that the two elements close lockt together (pp. 58 *et seq.*, full score) appear to wage: a common aim inspires their giant efforts and hastens the catastrophe—if such it may be termed. Repose at last: the breaking, dying eye lights up with one soft smile of reconcilement as the dreaded, yet desired, inevitable fulfils itself, the curtain falls."

Bülow repeats his disclaimer of any wish to set up this interpretation as the only valid one, but—save for the slight antagonism of its conclusion with his previous deprecation of a "dramatic" trend—it will stand a deal of questioning, since "it has been derived from an unqualified surrender to the impression of the whole, as well as to the special character of its single parts in their relation to the principal motive." This he proceeds to substantiate by the most remarkable musical analysis in the whole range of Wagner-literature, a flawless model for all such efforts; wellnigh bar by bar he takes us through the score, illuminating each recess in such wise that we seem to hear him at rehearsal. After devoting two full pages to the technique of the first thirty bars, he says: "We purposely have dwelt so long upon this introduction, because we *have never met so masterly an exposition in any instrumental work of this class*, without exception. We take it for granted the reader will not shirk the trouble of following with the score in hand. Let him compare the sketch with its execution: not a bar, not a note in this introduction is inessential; every detail has a meaning proved and justified in the Allegro section [main body of the work]. It is impossible to shape with more organic unity of form, than Wagner has in his Faust-overture. Set beside it any 'classic' overture with 'introduction' you please, and we challenge you to shew that it is not put in the shade by Wagner's tone-poem even in respect of form. Let us take Cherubini's admired overtures, for instance, and abide by one of the most fascinating and refreshing of them, the Abencérages. Here we also have an introduction, relatively quite compassionately brief; but what an eternity it lasts! You call this *music?* Dead pauses, nothing but continual false starts, phrase after phrase without point, strain without definite content, organised tuning-up, accompaniment to the audience's shifting of seats, musical setting of small talk such as 'Now for it!' 'They

really seem beginning,' 'Hark!' ''St, listen, 'st!'—The respectful hearer is led into a steppe; certainly he will reach a charming garden later on, but why the ugly introit?"

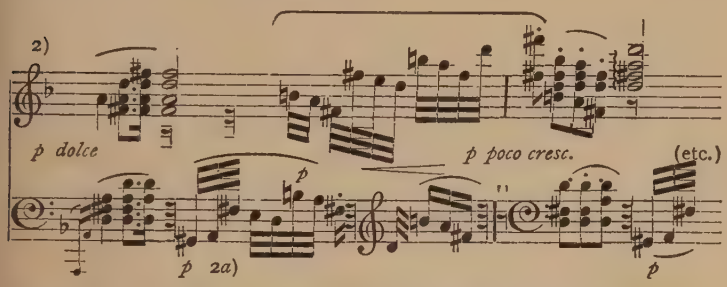
War is thus carried into the enemy's own camp; but that is a mere episode in this unique analysis, for another six pages are now employed on tracing the composer's execution of the idea mapped out in his introductory "sketch." From these I can merely cull a specimen, referring to page 45 of the partitur: "With what art it all is framed! Who else would have hit on that bold and yet so happy combination, the colour-blending of two trumpets *pianissimo* with two flutes and a piccolo (wide apart), save the author of a work that in itself is the equivalent of a whole practical course of instruction in scoring?" And Bülow's conclusion: "We believe that those who have not had their eyes opened to Wagner the instrumental composer by the overtures to 'Tannhäuser' and the 'Holländer,' or the prelude to 'Lohengrin,' will find in his Faust-overture a splendid opportunity for getting their cataract couched. Finally we beg all stiff-necked adversaries, to whom a reasoned enthusiasm for a man alive may seem antipathetic, to be so obliging as to shew us, if they can —*but on tenable grounds*—that we are wrong in holding Richard Wagner, among other things, for one of the few legitimate heirs and successors of that incarnate son of the god of music, Beethoven."

As Bülow assumes that his readers will "follow with the score in hand," he quotes no thematic examples, but I fear the non-professional British reader can seldom be exhorted to a similar course; so that it will be necessary to supplement Hans' æsthetic description with the musical notation of the main features in a masterpiece still far from having reaped its due in England. First, then, we have what Bülow justly calls the principal motive (1), with two subsidiary, but most important figures (1a and 1b):

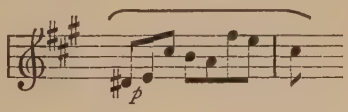


The generic kinship of "1" with the so-called "Öde" theme in *Parsifal* can scarcely fail to be remarked, and we may therefore

look on it as the musical representative of Desolation or blank Despair; whereas 1a may be read as Doubt, and 1b as bitter Denial. They form the beginning and end of the introductory *largo*, and constitute the Pessimistic key to all the work—at least in the only version known to us. In the middle of that *largo*, just as in the middle of the *allegro* itself, their sway is disputed by the second protagonist:

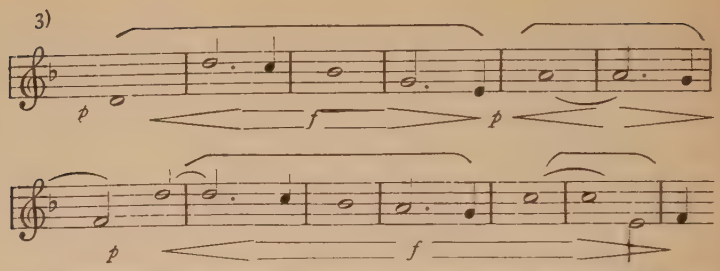


which we may take as representing Optimism or the allurements of Life, with a single subsidiary figure (2a) that speaks for itself as the graceful motion of sweet Content—in which sense it had been used, a few months prior to the original FAUST composition, for the chorus of Messengers of Peace, act ii. *Rienzi*:*

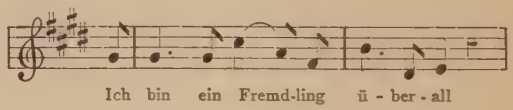


I shall have more to say about chief-motive 2, but this introduction further contains a fragment of a third theme, here curtailed to a mere Sigh, but given its full extent in the *allegro* after motive 1 has stormed itself first out of breath:

* J. van Santen Kolff was the first to draw attention to this resemblance, in course of his valuable essay *Der Faust-Ouverture Werden und Wachsen*, contributed to the *Bayr. Bl.* 1894, where he also justly points out that "it is almost note for note the same as the semiquaver violin-figure in the second bar of the slow introduction to the *Feen* overture (Dec. 1833), which afterwards becomes the brisk first theme of its Allegro."—My examples from the Faust-overture, by the way, are taken from Bülow's pianoforte-solo edition, though I have checked them with the full score, which remains unaltered, as Messrs Breitkopf and Haertel politely inform me, since its engraving in 1855.



In this example the *e* of the penultimate bar is assigned to the supporting bassoon, not to the oboe solo; yet it forms an integral part of the idea, as shewn by later recurrences. For the meaning of this theme I may not only adduce the choice of instrument, but also the strong resemblance of its latter half to a song Wagner must have often heard in Paris about the time he first wrote down this overture—cf. "Think of Franz Schubert's songs, and the vogue they enjoy here. This is a genre that admirably suits my inclination" etc. (*An End in Paris*, 1841). Turn to Schubert's "Wanderer" and you will find

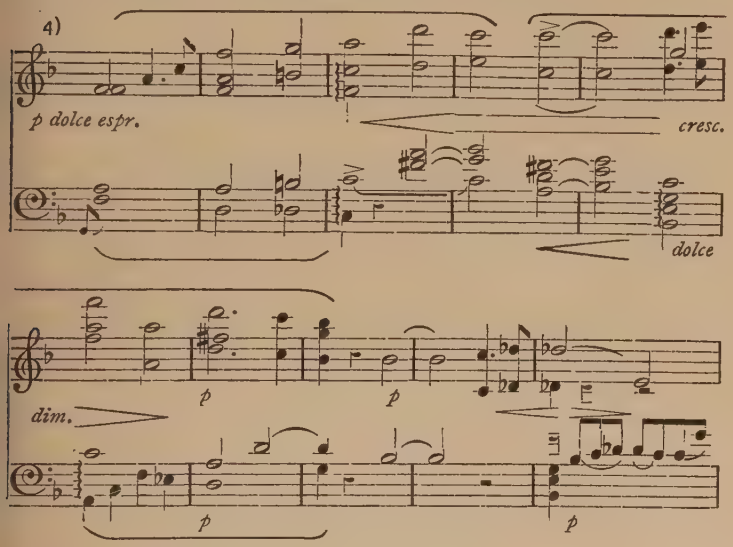


"A stranger everywhere"—those are the words which voice this phrase in Schubert's song, and I cannot help thinking that an involuntary association of ideas recalled it to Wagner's mind when planning out this overture, the back of the "first sketch" whereof presents a fragment of a chansonette such as he hoped to catch the Paris "vogue" with (vol. i, 286). Intimately connected with motive 1 through its octave leap etc., this theme may therefore represent the poignant Melancholy of "Faust in solitude." *

What shall we say of the fourth theme, that quoted in part by Liszt (page 21 *sup.*)? Wagner writes him Feb. 15, '55—with special reference to this portion of the *allegro*—"Of course there can be no question of Gretchen here, but still of Faust alone:

* There can be no doubt of it when we discover that its last six notes are identical, though in a different key, with the last six of Arindal's first aria in *Die Feen*—Arindal bewailing his solitude.

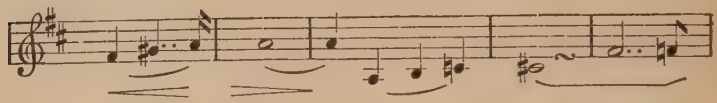
'Ein unbegreiflich holder Drang trieb mich durch Wald und Wiesen hin,' etc."* If we look up Goethe's *Faust* we shall find that Wagner made a tiny slip here, and substituted "Drang" for "Sehnen"; restoring the *Sehnen* we approach the borders of the *Tristan* mood, and the theme which Liszt could make "neither fish nor flesh of," in '52, reveals its sense at once:



Those last two and a half bars (repeated twice) proclaim this double-facing theme a memory of ecstatic Yearning, and all we want to know is whether *they* existed in the early version of the work. Until documentary comparison of the original and revised FAUST overtures shall have been instituted, it will be impossible to speak with absolute certainty; but I think we need little hesitation to answer that question in the affirmative, not only owing to the family likeness between these bars and motive 1, but since Wagner distinctly says he had been unable to introduce

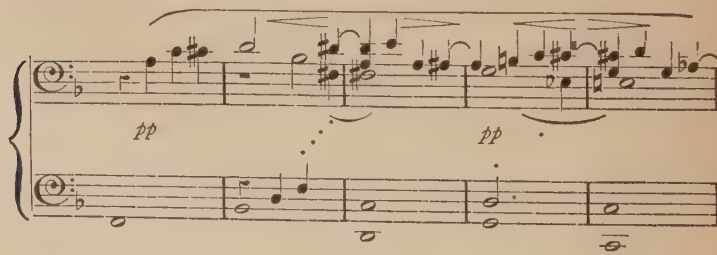
* "A fathomless enraptured yearning Drove me to roam 'neath open skies"—"And midst a thousand tear-drops burning I felt a world for me arise," the quatrain continues. Wagner had quoted it in full for his 1846 programme of the Ninth Symphony, interpreting the "yearning" as that "for love." It is the adolescent's vague expansion toward a bliss as yet unrealised, the *besoin d'aimer*.

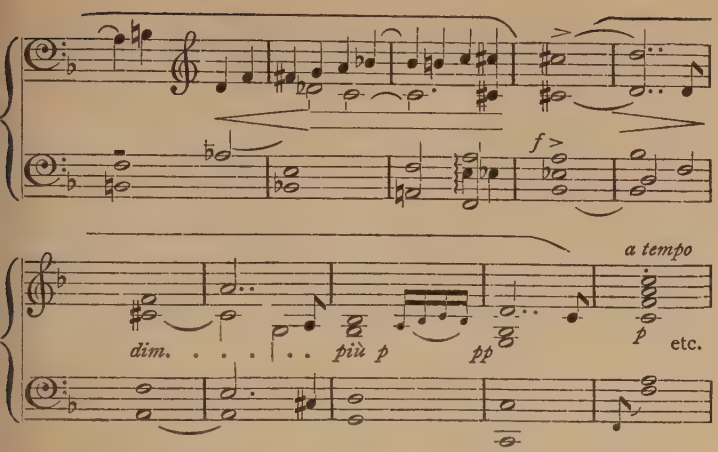
"any new motive." Moreover, not to drag in similarities from *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, the overture to *Rienzi* itself contains the following close parallel (just before the third entry of the Prayer theme):



Of course I need not print the well-known "*Blick*," or "Look" motive (a maddening name) from *Tristan*, but its absolute identity with the latter part of our theme will be obvious at a glance, and all the silly nonsense about Wagner's having borrowed it from Liszt's Faust-symphony—which he had even then not seen—must vanish as a ghost at cock-crow (cf. vol. iv, 514).

There are further anticipations of *Tristan* in this overture, however, and these I rate as due to the revision; in no case could they rank as "new" material, being such manifest derivatives from the old. I had wished to reserve the reference in the letter of Feb. '55 till we had finished our survey of the overture itself, but it now becomes imperative to cite its remark preceding that about there being "no Gretchen" here: "The middle section will please you better now. Naturally I was unable to introduce any new motive, as that would have involved my making almost a whole new work; all I could do here, was to unfold the mood a little wider, somewhat in the form of a cadenza." Here we are on firm ground as to at least one particular group of bars, though we cannot be so positive that a few of their precursors were not also harmonised with them in this revision; after theme 4 has been repeated in A major, and, modulating back to F, adorned with a beautifully suave subsidiary phrase (probably existing in the first version), the "cadenza" most decidedly is constituted by the following passage for the strings alone:

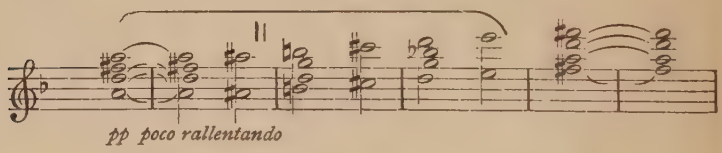




Save for the last two bars before *a tempo*—which remind us of the end of the *Rienzi* example, and may therefore be viewed as the original transition to the next subject—the whole atmosphere is Tristanesque, in style of harmony and all; a point to be remembered four years hence, when we come to charges of like nature with that advanced against the "Blickmotiv." But what of the "insufficient image of his longing, destroyed by Faust in his despair," according to Wagner's explanation of two years prior to the revision? *Here* is no trace of such a climax, nor can there ever have been if this "cadenza" is merely an unfolding, or elaboration, of the older passage. On the contrary, it drops to a point of perfect rest, as if our Faust were yielding to the entry of a blissful day-dream. Yes, and that triad of F major, which rounds off our example, is in reality the starting-point of motive 2 (p. 29 *sup.*), which had hitherto been absent from the overture since its brief announcement in the exposition. Surely this is the "image" summoned by Faust's longing; its first half is twin-sister to Elisabeth's "sei mir gegrüsst" in *Tannhäuser*, and thus our motive of Optimism, or Life's allurements, has at least a feminine shape to start with, adorned with all the gentle grace of its subsidiary figure (2a). It is nothing but a succubus, however; with every fresh caress it takes a more sinister aspect, and Faust's own subsidiary themes of Doubt and Denial (1a and 1b) rise up in greater and greater violence against it, till with one mighty hurl, followed by a series of *sforzando* blows and a stupendous

deep *a* flat thudded out from the drum, the mocking phantom lies shattered at his feet.* A long pause succeeds, followed by 22 bars of broken sobs (from theme 3), a picture of utter despondence—and we have reached the end of this unrivalled working-out or "middle section." Then we remember that in his letter of Jan. '55 Wagner spoke of having given "somewhat more extension and importance to the middle (second motive)," and we may fairly ask if he was not strictly speaking by the card with his reference to the "second motive," instead of loosely alluding (as some have supposed) to what I have shewn to be the *fourth* theme in this composition—*i.e.* if he had not really elaborated *two* adjacent situations, and if those letters of January and February '55 do not each refer to a different portion of that rather broad locality, "the middle"?

There is yet a third knotty question, which, like the first, will lead us on to *Tristan und Isolde.* After the final climax or catastrophe, and after the optimistic motive (2) has gently reappeared, only to melt away; after that has been succeeded by a most impressive repetition of the pessimist chief-motive (1), with its first and last notes each prolonged for four whole bars, as if our Faust were really giving up the ghost,—after all this we have a plain anticipation of the closing bars of *Tristan:*



Then, like a "last flutter of the veil of Maya," the graceful attendant on motive 2 soars up and up from the violins till it dissolves into a high *f* sharp, held for two bars *pianissimo* above repeated triads of D major for the softest wind—and we feel that this overture of Pessimism has ended in Nirvana. Now, can *this* significant anticipation have existed in the form of 1840, when the

* See also the letter to Uhlig of Nov. 27, 52: "Here Faust is the subject, and Woman floats before him as nothing but the vague, indefinite object of his desire, unseizable, unreachable; hence his despair, his curse on every torturing conception of the beautiful, his plunge into the mad sorcery of raving grief. Not till the second movement [of the intended symphony] was Woman to be *manifested*" etc.

piece was intended as no more than the first movement of a symphony? How much one wants these questions answered by plain facts! At present one can but guess at them, and yet they are of an importance second to none in the history of Wagner's artistic evolution, since this revision stands, in point of time, at the very centre of the composition of the *Ring des Nibelungen.*

Hear what Wagner himself tells Liszt Feb. 15, '55: "Here you have [a copy of] my revised Faust-overture, which will seem quite insignificant to you beside your own Faust-symphony. To *myself* the composition is interesting simply because of the period from which it dates; the revision has given me a liking for it again, tho', and as regards the latter I'm child enough to beg you to compare it with the earlier version, since it is a temptation to me to shew you thus the fruits of my experience and the greater delicacy of feeling which I have won. It seems to me as if one could see the plainest by revisions of this kind, what sort of spirit has descended on one, and what rawnesses one has sloughed off."

Unfortunately Liszt, who now had the material for such comparison at hand, was not to be lured into any reasoned criticism. Between three and four weeks later (March 12) he reports to Wagner that he has sent the copy of the new score to Härtels, as requested (see cap. IV.), but all he finds time to say of the actual revision is the following: "The alterations you have undertaken in the Faust-overture are splendid, and the work has decidedly gained thereby"; and next July, apropos of his own *Prometheus* revision: "It is a similar process to that of the sculptor at work on his marble; before its execution a symphonic, and still more a dramatic work, only exists in the *clay*, so to speak. This comparison is well illustrated by your new score for the Faust-overture, as also by some alterations in the Flying Dutchman." Such vague and general remarks may have been encouraging enough to their recipient, but leave us thirsting for the object-lessons to be reaped from detailed facts: imagine, for instance, what an increase of illumination von Bülow would have bequeathed us, had *he* had access to the earlier score at the time he made his public survey of the later.

Years after, in 1864 to wit, Bülow was presented by Wagner with a fragment of the original composition, which he ultimately bestowed in turn on the Wagner-museum. There it lay idle, like so many other relics in that strong-box, till last October 5 ('05),

when the *Mus. Wochenblatt* brought out a phototype facsimile. Unfortunately, this "Famoses Blatt"—its author's pencilled superscription—breaks off at bar 15 beyond the Introduction, and therefore its addition to our knowledge touches none of the main problems broached above (for details see Appendix). But where is the completed 1840 score itself? In J. van Santen Kolff's essay already referred to (*Bayr. Bl.* 1894) that 1840 manuscript is supposed to reside in the Liszt-museum at Weimar—a pure myth, as the custodian, Dr Obrist, has recently apprised me in courteous reply to an enquiry. What became of it, then, after its return to Wagner in 1852? Is it *this*, that its composer gave to Frau Wesendonck with the inscription "R. W., Zurich, 17. Jan. 55, in remembrance of his dear friend"? That I cannot say as yet, but this I am permitted to: the autograph score of 1840 now reposes among the many treasures so lovingly preserved at Wahnfried. So much has lately issued, in reduplication, from that sanctuary, that we must exercise our souls in patience until the turn for full enlightenment on this historic point comes round.

As there was some idea in Wagner's mind of dedicating the publication of the new FAUST score to Mathilde Wesendonck—an idea discarded, so she tells us, for reason of its "gloomy motto"—it is possible that we really owe this fine revision to an expressed desire of hers to hear the work. However that be, a week after its completion she had, and of course enjoyed, the opportunity of hearing it; for Wagner conducted at the Zurich Casino his second Panharmonic concert of this winter on the 23rd of January, with the following programme:

FIRST PART.

1. Overture to the "Zauberflöte" . . . Mozart.
2. "Sehnsucht" and "Trockene Blumen,"* sung by Frau Heim . . . Franz Schubert.

* Is it nothing but a coincidence that the so-called "Question to Fate" in the Brünnhilde-Siegmund scene of *Walküre* act ii (and later) has the same musical form as the accompaniment to the end of the first verse of this song of Schubert's, itself a sad interrogation? We know that Frau Heim joined with Wagner in a private trial of the first act of that drama; may he not also have heard from her this "Trockene Blumen" before his composition of the middle of the second act?—N.B. The identical formula occurs at the end of Schumann's song, "Frage"; but I scarcely think Wagner knew that.

3. Fantasia for violoncello (with pfte accompaniment) by Piatti, on themes from the *Puritani;* Herr Mayer . . . . Bellini.
4. "Eine Faust-Ouverture" (written January 1840, revised January 1855) . Richard Wagner.

Motto: "Der Gott, der mir im Busen wohnt,
Kann tief mein Innerstes erregen,
Der über allen meinen Kräften thront,
Er kann nach Aussen nichts bewegen;
Und so ist mir das Dasein eine Last,
Der Tod erwünscht, das Leben mir verhasst." *

GÖTHE.

SECOND PART.

Symphony in C minor . . . . L. van Beethoven.
(*The concert begins at half-past six.*)

Trust the good Zurich philistines to plant a Bellini incongruence in an otherwise ideal programme! But they redeemed that solecism by insisting on hearing the FAUST overture *da capo*, as we learn from the *Eidgenössische Zeitung* of Jan. 25, where "this difficult and profound composition" is very sympathetically noticed, though confession is made that "it needs repeated hearing, to understand it"—which may account for the strange reading into the middle of the work of "the pious memories of childhood." A month later, after its repetition at Wagner's "farewell" concert, the same journal speaks of "his gigantic Faust-overture"; which gives a better idea of its local effect.

Leipzig was the next city to present this overture—with a rather mixed reception, if we may go by the report to the London *Musical World* of Nov. 24, 55: "An interesting concert was given on the 8th of November, at the Gewandhaus, in aid of the *Orchester Pensionsfonds*. At this concert it is always the aim to bring out something new and attractive, in order to increase the funds; and this time, to judge from the numbers who attended, it was not altogether unsuccessful. The first part embraced an overture called *Faust*, by Herr Richard

* In prose, as near as possible: "The god that dwells within my breast, can stir my inmost soul profoundly; enthroned above my every force, yet nothing can he move beyond me: and so existence is a weariness, I wish for death, this life is curst to me."—The programme I derive from Herr Steiner's reproduction in his *Neujahrsblatt* of 1902.

Wagner (first time). . . . Respecting the merits of this composition, opinions, as usual, differ. Some shake their heads, and say 'Sonderbar'; others, more bold, exclaim, at once, 'Schlecht' (bad); and others, on the contrary, laugh, look pleased, and cry out, 'Sehr gut' (very good). For my own part, on first hearing it at the rehearsal, I must confess it went beyond my comprehension. On its being repeated, I was 'almost persuaded to become a disciple,' and was of opinion that Herr Wagner had really written something 'good' this time. But in the concert, how soon my hopes and good wishes were crushed, for more than one half of the overture sounded *very* much like Robert Schumann and other composers. If Wagner intends establishing a new era in music, why should he fall into the error of imitating? The overture to *Faust* is said to have been composed in the year 1840, during Herr Wagner's sojourn in Paris, since which time he has kept it in his desk, and this year revised and published it, whether for his own benefit, or that of the 'Future,' I know not."—The "more than one half" is distinctly precious, seeing that Wagner's FAUST overture is nothing if not a closely-knit organic whole;* but we will not stop to wrangle with a weak reporter who so clearly let his own opinion be overruled by those around. For it is evident that the work was a failure at Leipzig, under the baton of Rietz, and we may connect with this performance the following remarks in a letter of Wagner's to Liszt of the end of December 55: "I'm heartily glad of my Faust-overture's fiasco, since I perceive therein a wholesome punishment for having published the work against my better judgment."

Liszt himself does not appear to have conducted the revised version till late in 1856, but the more strenuous Bülow stepped into the breach at that year's commencement, and accordingly we read in the *Neue Zeitschrift* of Feb. 29, 56: "At the concert of Stern's orchestral union in Berlin the 31st of January [no: Feb. 1] Wagner's Faust-overture came to performance, and was immediately applauded at its close. Loud hisses followed, and

* Compare with the above E. Dannreuther's verdict: "It is a masterpiece of construction and instrumentation. The influence of Beethoven is apparent in the concise power of the themes, and the plain direct manner in which they are set forth, yet the work is Wagner's own from beginning to end' (*Grove's Dict.* iv, 351—1889 edition).

several very well-known musical personages were observed among the hissers. This opposition was answered, however, by a thundering and fairly general bravo, which did not cease until v. Bülow, who had conducted the work, came forward and bowed in the name of the composer [Spare me; that is how the *N. Z.* puts it. —Tr.]. Nothing new under the sun! Only the other day we were reminded of a bygone verdict on Beethoven's Leonora-overture, and this fact recalls the envy and cabals, on the part of his colleagues, with which Mozart had to contend in Vienna. Among the critics, so far as we can ascertain, there is hardly anyone but Ernst Kossak who expresses himself with prudence and decorum." As regards the Berlin critics at least, this is confirmed by Bülow's letter to Stern of Feb. 3, in which—after handsomely declining a fee transmitted for his services, and begging that it may be added to the emolument of Laub, the leader of the violins—he exclaims: "Another big petition! Will you, with your respected name, not publicly protest against Engel's loathsome critique in the Spener'sche [Ztg], as you intended once before? Write down your own opinion of the Faust-overture, and defend a composition of such noble character and profound conception against the scurrilities of the ignoramus press! Do this as you alone will be able to, and give me a fresh motive for real and inextinguishable gratitude." Bravo, Hans; you were always the best of the bunch! And so it came that, Stern apparently not caring to, you dropped your own effective bomb among the "envious colleagues" a few months later.

Who the *Munich* champion was, we do not know, but at the end of this same February, 56, the *N. Zft* tells us: "Richard Wagner's 'Faust-overture' came to performance at the last Odeon-concert, Munich. The Augsburg Allg. Ztg (no. 51, Beilage) contains a long article about it, the first appreciative one we have met with in this paper. With a sense of history, and correct æsthetic understanding, it takes the important work and Wagner himself under its protection against the raging of the Munich philistines, who hissed the overture down." The two chief capitals of Germany, and its one-time leading musical centre, how foolish they must feel if ever they let their memories roam back to fifty years ago!

At St Gallen in January, Sondershausen in August, and Vienna

(under Hellmesberger) in October, 1856, we hear of performances unsoiled by hissing; but it was not until the early sixties, when Wagner took it touring, so to speak, that his FAUST overture really came into its own. An outline of its further progress on the continent will be found in the aforesaid article of van Santen Kolff, who tells us that its first performance in the city of its birth did not take place till 1870, under Pasdeloup, not many weeks before the war made Wagner's name anathema in Paris. As to London, the "first performance in England" was that given at the Crystal Palace Oct. 10, 1874, under August Manns—as I am informed by Mr C. A. Barry, who kindly also sends me his valuable analytical programme for Hans Richter's first presentation of the work in London proper, May 7, 1879 (repeated May 27, 1880)—but it is only in quite recent days, and owing to the enthusiasm of Mr. Henry J. Wood at the Queen's Hall, that Londoners have begun to conquer their sustained indifference towards this masterpiece. Make a close acquaintance with it, dear reader, no matter where you dwell! If you are but a moderately expert player, you will find endless delight in familiarising yourself with the beauties and profundities of this greatest of all "tone-poems," by aid of Hans von Bülow's perfect reproduction of it for the pianoforte (solo or duet). Even without the varied riches of its instrumental colouring, you then will see how prominent a place must be assigned this overture in its composer's life.

II.

THE LONDON OFFER.

A society in search of a conductor. Wagner's nomination: Sainton's claim challenged by Praeger after thirty years; Praeger refuted. — Tannhäuser-*overture in London* 1854. — *A real meeting of the Philharmonic.* — *Praeger and "the books."—The actual offer; correspondence right and left.—Praeger written to: a garbled document.—Anderson's mission to Zurich.—Praeger bungles a commission.—Triumphs of* Tannhäuser *and* Lohengrin *in Austria and Germany.*—Tannhäuser *at the Zurich theatre; Wagner's farewell.*

> *It isn't my affair to go to London and conduct Philharmonic concerts . . . but I felt it was a question of either definitely turning my back on every chance and all attempt of intervention in our art-publicity, or of grasping just this hand extended to me.*
>
> (To Liszt, Jan. '55).

"Mr. Costa has resigned the post of Conductor at the Concerts of the Philharmonic Society. M. Hector Berlioz has been already applied to by one of the directors; but having been already announced for two concerts of the New Philharmonic, it is doubtful whether he can accept the office of the elder. Dr. Spohr has been applied to by another of the directors; but Dr. Spohr, although hale and healthy, is too old for such a labour as that of directing the concerts and conducting the directors. Besides, the Elector of Hesse will not part with his favourite Capellmeister for so long a period at a stretch. The ancient system of changing the conductor at every concert can hardly be resorted to again. The seven directors are therefore in a strait . . . For our own parts we have no choice, and prefer standing under arms until the decision is come to. When the conductor is appointed, we can easily make ready, present and fire at him." Thus the first leaderette in the London *Musical World* of

December 30, 1854, with a certain grim prophetic humour in its last sentence.

A week later, among various "*on dit*"s in connection with this matter, the editor of the *Mus. World* remarks: "If these reports have any real foundation, there must have been no less than seven 'offers' made—an 'offer' by each particular Director. M. Sainton 'offered' M. Berlioz; Mr. —— 'offered' Dr. Spohr; Mr. —— 'offered' M. Hallé; Mr. —— 'offered' Mr. Benedict; Mr. —— 'offered' Herr Molique; Mr. —— 'offered' Mr. Alfred Mellon; and —— 'offered' Mr. G. Anderson. Every Director must, therefore (if this be 'sooth'), have had a Conductor in his eye, and 'offered' him." Presently we shall see that Mr. Davison, the editor in question, had very nearly hit the mark with his first-named "offerer," merely erring as to his exact proposal, and thus accounting for the obviously erroneous statement of December.

A fortnight after that (issue of Jan. 20, 55): "There is but one theme on the carpet at the moment in our restless busy world of music. Who is to be the future conductor of the Philharmonic (the *old* Philharmonic) Concerts? Who is to undertake the responsibility of filling up the place left vacant by no less a man than Signor Michael Costa? . . . Though by no means behind the curtain, we have some suspicion of what passes there; and the bruits and whispers of those mysterious recesses, in vulgar theatrical phraseology denominated '*coulisses*,' are not entirely withheld from us. We shall then disclose, without further preamble, what has come to our knowledge since we last addressed our readers.

"When it was decided that M. Berlioz could not manage to release himself from his compact with Dr. Wylde and the New Philharmonic Society, . . . foiled in their endeavours to obtain the services of *one of* the foreign conductors who had been summoned from across the seas to direct the proceedings of their formidable rival at Exeter Hall, the seven directors put their heads together in Hanover-square, and came to the sapient resolution of applying to another. *Proh pudor!* The *bâton* decided upon was that of the highly respectable *Kapellmeister* of Stuttgart, Herr Peter von Lindpaintner. Peter was to be applied to without delay. . . . Peter was loth; or Peter was busy, or asleep, or too wide awake. At any rate, Peter could not, or would not, come . . . The stick was still in search of a

conductor—like Cœlebs in search of a wife, or Diogenes of an honest man—a 'man of wax.' It had only just been declared illegal to offer the conductorship of these concerts to any one, foreigner or native, *who was resident in London.* The illegality—provided for the occasion — may account for no application having been made to Mr. Benedict, or to Herr Molique, or to—Mr. Sterndale Bennett (!). Further consultations took place—further propositions, objections, deliberations, and so forth—*huis-clos.* The directors may have called up spirits, like Macbeth—for aught we know. The 'fetches' of seven great continental conductors, appearing in grim succession, may have tortured with doubts the brain of the perplexed directorate; Schumann of Düsseldorf, Lachner of Mannheim, Eckert of Wien, Hiller of Köln, Hanssenns of Brussels, Kücken of Stuttgart, and Taubert of Berlin, *bâton* in hand, like the seven apparitions of kings, may have stalked across the platform of the orchestra . . . to the dismay of the now undirected 'seven'—for anything we can say to the contrary . . . We can only say that, if the images of those great continental conductors did actually present themselves to the imaginations of the seven who represent the aggregate of Philharmonic wisdom, they were exorcised, *laid*—in soberer phrase, kicked out, rejected. The seven would not do. But now—

> 'The eighth appears, who bears a glass,
> Which shows me (them) many more!'

"That eighth was RICHARD WAGNER, in whose glass was mirrored the 'likeness of the appearance' of the MUSIC OF THE FUTURE, its prophets and its preachers. . . .

"'The interchange of contraries is good,' said Lord Bacon. But what a look out for the subscribers! It is well known that Richard Wagner has little respect for any music but his own; that he holds Beethoven to have been a child until he wrote the Posthumous quartets and the Mass in D, which he (Wagner) regards as his own *starting points* (*!*); that he entertains much the same opinion of Felix Mendelssohn as Felix Mendelssohn was wont to entertain of Richard Wagner; and that, finally, he is earnestly bent on upsetting all the accepted forms and canons of art—forms and canons which Bach and Händel, Haydn and Mozart, Beethoven and Mendelssohn respected—in order the more surely to establish his doctrines that rhythm is superfluous,

counterpoint a useless bore, and every musician ancient or modern, himself excepted, either an impostor or a blockhead. Now such rhodomontade may pass muster in the dreary streets of Weimar, where Franz Listz reigns, like a musical King Death, and quaffs destruction to harmony and melody; or in the æsthetic purlieus of Leipzic, where, muddled with beer and metaphysics, the Teutonic *dilettanti* have allowed their wits to go astray, and become dupes of the grossest charlatanism; but in England, where Liszt was never much thought of, and where the beer and the philosophy are manufactured from more substantial and less deleterious stuff, it can hardly be. If the brilliant meteor, Berlioz, failed to entice the musical mind of this country from its devotion to the bright and pure spheres of art, into his own erratic and uncertain course, what chance can there be for the duller Richard, with his interminable pamphlets? We have no objection to see *Lohengrin* or *Tannhäuser*, without the music; and Mr E. T. Smith, after the run of Meyerbeer's *Etoile du Nord*, might venture with some effect into those unexplored territories (*Tannhäuser* would look formidable in a transparency). But we trust Mr. Gye and Lord Ward will not be tempted into the Wagnerian waters; for if ever there was a veritable man-mermaid it is Richard, who looks fair enough above stream, but whose end is shrouded in a muddy quagmire of impenetrable sophistry.

"Whether it be true, as we have heard, that Mr. Anderson, one of the Directors of the Philharmonic, has set out on a journey, to find Wagner, and bring him to England, we cannot positively assert. Nor are we in a condition to answer for the contingency —that, in case the 'Music of the Future' should be found coy and unwilling, and Wagner refuse to bite the Philharmonic hook, the music of the past is to be ferretted out at Hanover, and in the person of a venerable imitator of Carl Maria von Weber—Heinrich Marschner—conducted in state to Hanover-Square, and there invested with the stick. All we can say for a certainty is that we shall say nothing more at present, since we know nothing more than what we have confided to our readers. We leave it to their own acuteness to glean the truth from out of an unusual cloud of mystery, surmise and doubt."

This foretaste of the reception Wagner was soon to be meted at the hands of most of the London critics is directly followed by

a milder postscript: "**** According to the latest intelligence, Mr. Anderson, one of the directors of the Philharmonic Society, has gone to Zurich. The object of his journey is to engage Herr Richard Wagner, composer of *Tannhäuser*, etc., to conduct the eight concerts for the season 1855—Mr. Costa having seceded. It is a long way to travel for such a purpose, and in the snow too. But we believe Herr Wagner to be an adept at the *bâton;* and that is important. It would be of no use applying to any ordinary phenomenon. The task of stepping into the shoes of the Autocrat of all the Orchestras is hardly less perilous, in a harmonious point of view, than that of mounting the throne of a deceased Czar, in a political sense. Herr Wagner, however, is not an ordinary, but an *extra*-ordinary phenomenon; and we understand he entertains very decided opinions of his own. Thus, it is possible, things may go on resolutely, if not smoothly. Herr Liszt will, of course, travel from Weimar to London, and play some of his latest 'arabesques'; for where Wagner is, Liszt is sure to come, in shadow, if not in substance.—With Hector Berlioz at the 'New' Philharmonic, and Richard Wagner at the 'Old,' we may expect some thunder this season. M. Jullien should prolong his concerts at Covent-Garden, and drown it.—So that, after all, the prognostications in our 'leader,' above, have been in some degree justified.—(*Friday, Jan.* 19, 1855)."

Davison was a little behindhand in his information, as Anderson not only had "gone to Zurich," but had settled with Wagner and left that place about two days before the above postscript was penned (quite possibly by Praeger, "whose signature is *Trois Etoiles*"—see later). But the proceedings of "the seven" had been kept shrouded in "mystery," and, as regards the original nomination, that mystery has found its counterpart in later days: namely, in what I long since branded as 'the Philharmonic myth'; an interesting legend worth re-telling, particularly as it brings us into close relations with some of Wagner's London comrades in this 1855. So here it shall be told again, and for the final time so far as *my* pen is concerned:—

In the July *Quarterly* of 1888 the late Dr Hueffer refers to a meeting of the Old Philharmonic's directors at the end of 1854, and narrates that after several other names had been proposed for the conductorship without finding general support, "At last M. Sainton the famous violinist, who at the age of seventy still

lives amongst us in full possession of his mental and artistic faculties, rose to his feet and named Wagner. He himself had no personal cognisance of Wagner's capacities, neither had any of the other directors; but, as M. Sainton remarked, a man who had been so much abused must have something in him. This sentiment was received with acclamation, and it was unanimously resolved that a leap in the dark should be made." Reproducing this in his *Half a Century of Music in England* (London 1889), says Hueffer: "When the above statement, founded upon M. Sainton's relation to me, appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, Mr Ferdinand Praeger, one of Wagner's earliest admirers, addressed a letter to the musical papers," the greater part whereof Hueffer proceeds to quote (and confute). That letter constituting an important item in our evidence, in fact the very essence of 'the Philharmonic myth,' I prefer to cite the exact form in which it appeared in the *Musical World* of July 28, 1888, addressed to the editor (no longer Davison, who had died three years before):

Sir,—In your extract from the new number of the Quarterly, I find that "at a meeting of the directors" . . . (of the Philharmonic Society, convened for the election of a new conductor) . . . "Mr. Sainton . . . rose to his feet and named Wagner," although "he himself had no personal cognisance of Wagner's capacities; neither had any of the other directors; but, as Mr. Sainton remarked, a man who had been so much abused must have something in him. This sentiment was received with acclamation, and it was unanimously resolved that a leap in the dark should be made." On the strength of its being a matter of historical interest, I would venture to supply the key to this otherwise too emotional version of the proceedings of the conscientious directors of the society in question. Mr. Sainton had a dear old friend, Charles Lüders, an excellent musician, albeit of the so-called old school; and I had the good fortune to be intimate with both. To these friends I had suggested Wagner, of whom neither knew even the existence. Myself, I had already, in 1845, foreshadowed the future greatness of Richard Wagner when reviewing the performance of 'Rienzi,' at Dresden, in the then existing *English Gentleman*: knowing also his remarkable gift as a conductor. When the directors heard that I had proposed to Sainton to name Wagner, I was invited to attend their meeting, where I gave all the information they required. This must have been most satisfactory to them, for I received the voted thanks and enjoyed the honour of a "shake hands all round." The first correspondence concerning this matter was between Wagner

and myself, and the master's original letters are now in possession of [T. O.*]. These will appear with many others in "Wagner as I knew him," which I have written at the request of [T. O.], and which will be ultimately published in English, French, and German.—I am, Sir, yours obediently, FERDINAND PRAEGER.

In itself it does not matter twopence, whether the nomination was a sudden happy-thought of Sainton's, or whether Praeger had previously suggested it to him; but since there are other misstatements in this letter, the point may really rank, as Praeger grandiloquently claims for it, as "a matter of historical interest," especially as he thus intensifies his claim in the dedicatory preface to his later-issued book: † "It was through my sole exertions that the Philharmonic Society in 1855 offered Wagner the post of conductor"—a statement which drew from a well-informed reviewer in the *Musical Times* of April 1892 the comment that it "will surprise many, and in the interests of truth calls for confirmation or refutation. It seems improbable that this can have been so, from the fact that up to the summer of the previous year Praeger was strongly opposed to the 'new German school,' as appears from a letter which he addressed to the *Musical World* of July 24, 1854, and in which he gives an entertaining account of the Rotterdam Musical Festival of that year, and of his journey thither from Cologne in a Rhine steamboat in company with a number of German musicians and critics. These kept up an incessant discussion about music, 'till at last,' says Praeger, 'I lost my patience, and told them roundly that their *Zukunfts-musik* (music of the future) was no better than *Deutschlands Zukunft* (the future of Germany)'." ‡ Another person to whom this claim gave serious pause immediately the book appeared, was Mr Joseph Bennett, who wrote as follows in the *Daily Telegraph* of April 5, 1892: "We are not quite sure that the enthusiasm of Mr Praeger for his own connection with the master did not overlie his sense of accuracy. He claims credit for being the means of bringing Wagner to England, through his friendship, and that of

* I shall consistently employ this symbol, representing "the owner" (i.e. of the said letters and Praeger's copyright), as it would be cruel to hand down that innocent person's real name to posterity.—W. A. E.

† Begun 1885, but not published until a few months after its author's death, which occurred in September 1891.

‡ See also page 61 *infra*.

the late Charles Lüders, with Prosper Sainton, at that time a Philharmonic director. We have reason to believe that Praeger was less concerned in the matter than Lüders, who had been Sainton's friend in his early and struggling days, and had acquired a real influence over the impetuous and not easily moved Frenchman." Further, in March '94 the famous tenor Dr W. H. Cummings, then treasurer of the Philharmonic, wrote to myself, "My late friend Prosper Sainton frequently told me that it was *he*, and not Praeger."

Undoubtedly the simplest "confirmation or refutation" might have been supplied by the Society's archives, had I not finally ascertained from one of the present directors that the earliest minute-book extant does not commence till ten years later than Wagner's Philharmonic season;* so that the priceless "vote of thanks" remains uncertified, and we feel a twinge of sympathy with Praeger when he tells us in his compilation, "Up to the present time I have never been able to discover how it was that seven sedate gentlemen could have been so influenced by my red-hot enthusiasm as to have been led to offer the appointment to Richard Wagner" (*Wagner as I knew him*, p. 219). Wagner's own letters to Praeger will shortly teach us to eliminate the—shall we call it too emotional?—"how it was," but I first must quote from a contribution of my own to the *Musical Standard* of May 1894;† for which the reader must kindly forgive me on the plea that it is so much safer not to frame old memories in new words. Here, then, is the deposition of W. A. E. of the end of last century: "I took the opportunity, a few days ago, of visiting an old friend of Sainton's, a French gentleman who has lived in London since 1860, and of asking him what he knew of Sainton in relation to Wagner . . [see cap. VI.] . . and he informed me

* In 1862 George Hogarth, then Secretary, published a book entitled *The Philharmonic Society of London*, carrying its history from 1813 to that date, but he has nothing more than this to say on the preliminaries of Wagner's engagement: "This was the last season of Mr Costa's conductorship [1854]. Before the commencement of the following season, he unexpectedly declined to accept the renewal of his engagement which was offered him, and the Directors after much and anxious deliberation, offered the appointment to Herr Richard Wagner, the celebrated dramatic composer, by whom it was accepted."

† A time when I was being attacked tooth and nail for daring to impugn P.'s reliability, but with the net result that it was scattered to the four winds of heaven. See Appendix. 375

that Sainton had repeatedly told him that he (S.) had proposed the appointment quite *à l'improviste*, having already heard a good deal about Wagner from *Lüders:* moreover this Mons. Z. expressed the opinion, which I am bound to say is shared by many people, that *Wagner as I knew him* would never have been published during the lifetime of either Lüders or Sainton. . . . I also paid a visit to Sainton's *son*, who not only confirmed the statements of Mons. Z., but also shewed me the original letter ('Zurich, 19 Dec., 1855') whence the late Dr. Hueffer took those extracts for the *Quarterly* of July 1888—extracts in part reprinted in the *Musical World* of the same month. For what reason, I do not know—probably on account of the reference to Costa,—but Dr. Hueffer had omitted a very instructive passage, namely: 'Je sais trop bien maintenant *ce que t'a couté ma vocation à Londres, avec laquelle tu avais* offensé à mort Mr. Costa, qui a su se venger en bon Napolitain. Sa vengeance devait alors frapper sur Toi en même tems que sur Anderson,* qui—*sur ta recommendation trop chaleureuse*—avait eu l'insolence d'aller à Zurich même, pour m'engager.' The words italicised by me contain the whole matter in a nutshell, for neither in this letter, nor in that to Liszt [May 16, 55: 'Sainton, who was the cause of my hapless engagement'], is there a syllable about Praeger in this connection, though in both letters his name is mentioned as one of Wagner's London friends."

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* This reference is only to be explained by a protracted controversy in the *Musical World* of mid-'55 between Anderson and a member of the Queen's Band whom he had discharged at the end of March; for in that journal's issue of July 7 E. Chipp (the said member) publicly thanks Costa for his support—Costa having found room for him in the orchestra of the Royal Italian Opera. As far as one can judge at this distance of time, Anderson seems to have been entirely in the wrong; but Wagner's information would naturally be gained at second or third hand. Sainton's connection with the affair was extremely slight and simple: so soon as it was insinuated (*not* by Chipp) that he and Anderson, tho' in receipt of high pay themselves, screwed down the wages of their subordinates, he promptly resigned his post as leader of that band, early in April '55, without stooping to a public explanation. It cannot have been *he*, who classed himself with Anderson as a victim of Costa's, for he remained leader of the orchestra under Costa at the Opera and Sacred Harmonic for another quarter of a century; moreover, on the autograph letter the couple of lines about Costa *are crossed through*, quite evidently by Prosper Sainton.—*Who* was purveyor of the cock-and-bull story to Wagner, we may readily guess. (Note of 1905, W. A. E.)

Ere long I shall prove the extreme unlikelihood of Praeger's having even casually suggested this nomination either to Sainton or Lüders, supposing him to have privately known them then; but whatever credit may be due for calling Wagner to our inhospitable shores, my last quotation already shews that the master himself gave it to Sainton while the event was still fresh in his memory. Still more calamitous for Praeger's claim, however, is a piece of evidence not available until four years after I had published the above:—In a letter to Otto Wesendonck of March 20, 1855, says Wagner: "My favourite London acquaintance down to now is the first violinist Sainton, a native of Toulouse, impulsive (*feurig*), good-hearted and charming. He alone is the cause of my summons to London. For he has been living many years in the most intimate friendship with a German, Lüders; the latter read my art-writings, which so prepossessed him in my favour that he imparted them to Sainton as best he could, and both came to the conclusion that I positively *must* be an able man. So, when Sainton proposed me to the directors and had to explain how he knew me, he told a fib—that he himself had seen me conduct; because, as he said, the true ground for his conviction about me would have been unintelligible to these people." Again not a hint does Wagner breathe of Praeger's having been instrumental in the smallest degree,* and that in the heyday of their alleged mutual confidences; in fact poor Ferdinand is named but once to Otto, in quite another category, whereas Sainton is honoured with a whole-page encomium (see cap. III.).

But why on earth should Sainton "not have even known the existence" of Wagner? How on earth could a musician of his standing and experience have *avoided* knowing it at the end of

* What shall we say, then, to Praeger's putting the following remark into Wagner's *own mouth* in course of a fancy speech alleged to have been delivered at the private farewell-gathering of June '55?—"'I am sorry for you'—addressing myself—'for you have to bear the chief brunt of it, since it was you who moved the Philharmonic to call me over (*mich zu berufen*); but in return you shall come to Zurich in the summer,'" etc., etc. This crowning embellishment of the Philharmonic myth is contained in Praeger's German book *alone*, "translated by the author from the English" *after* Dr Hueffer's account had twice appeared in print (internal evidence, viz. the omission of "and is" from "He [Sainton] was and is an intimate friend of mine," proves the posteriority beyond dispute).

1854, when the *Tannhäuser* overture had already been given and abused in London several times? The first occasion had been a concert of the New Philharmonic, May 1,* when the *Musical World* (May 6) delivered itself of the following: "After all the talk that has been, at home and abroad, about Herr Richard Wagner's overture to *Tannhäuser*, we certainly were led to expect something better than we heard. It is enormously difficult to play, and taxed the powers of the magnificent band, under Herr Lindpaintner's direction, to the utmost. With regard to the music, it is such queer stuff, that criticism would be thrown away upon it. We never listened to an overture at once so loud and empty. And Richard Wagner, according to Franz Liszt, is entrusted with no less important a mission than the regeneration of the musical art." Who *wrote* that tirade, we will not inquire, as no answer could be forthcoming now, but it appeared in the paper for which F. Praeger acted only two months later as "our own Correspondent" (to be proved from his own pen later on). It is instructive, however, to learn that there had already been a deal of "talk, at home," as well as "abroad," about R. Wagner's work.

The "talk" was considerably augmented by this New Philharmonic performance, for the *Times* of May 3, 54, came out with a jewel: "The almost impossible overture of Herr Richard Wagner, introduced for the first time to an English audience and played with surprising accuracy and decision, would do very well for a pantomime or Easter piece. It is a weak parody of the worst compositions, not of M. Berlioz, but of his imitators. So much fuss about nothing, such a pompous and empty commonplace, has seldom been heard." That, of course, was by Davison, not only editor of the *M. World*, but also critic for the *Times*. As a rule this paper and the *Athenæum* were at daggers drawn in art-affairs, but Wagner's music seems to have aligned them for once, as the latter journal of May 6 dismisses the overture thus: "Of this composition a notice has been given in

* In vol. iv, p. 465, I erroneously gave this date as "April 26." It had really been announced for then, but "was postponed in consequence of that day having been set apart by Government for one of 'fast and humiliation'" in connection with the Crimean war (see contemporary journals). Somehow the "humiliation" seems to fit in rather aptly with this particular postponement.

the *Athenæum* (No. 1312). The *motivi* which it contains, in addition to those of the March introduced the other evening at the *Amateur Society's Concert* [under Henry Leslie *], are the only *motivi* which we have retained from the opera,—and the scoring and elaboration of them, as has been said, are little to our liking. There are better orchestral pages (this, too, has heretofore been stated) in Herr Wagner's 'Lohengrin,' but the best among them furnishes a poor warrant for the self-assertion of one who conceives himself called to the regeneration of German

* Nevertheless the overture must still be considered the first piece of *Wagner's* music played publicly in England, for the *M. World* of April 15, 54, reporting on the Amateur Musical Society's concert of the 10th, informed its readers: "The march of Herr Richard Wagner, the Mahomed of modern music, though eccentric, has some curious and striking points. It laboured under a great disadvantage, however. The original score and parts not being at hand, a new orchestral arrangement was made for the occasion; and this fact may possibly have militated to its disadvantage. We cannot say that it was entirely understood." That really is exquisite, however benevolent Mr Leslie's intentions, and one begins to wonder if Lindpaintner, too, had rearranged the overture. But *what* was the form of the "'MARCH FROM TANNHÄUSER.' By Richard Wagner. J. J. Ewer & Co." which the *M. Wd* reviewed July 22, 54, in the same number with "our own Correspondent's" letter from Rotterdam? It was simply a pirated pfte-solo which Messrs Ewer had begun to advertise as a "new publication" at least a month before. Yet here is the entire review: "As, according to some German transcendentalists, it is the mission of Mr Richard Wagner to announce to the world the 'music of the future,' he merits attention. But for that we should have dismissed the present composition with a line, which is as much as it is really worth. A more common-place, lumbering, and awkward thing of its kind we never perused. That, however, our readers may not accuse us of prejudice, we shall present them with a specimen. Here, for instance, is a lofty example of the 'music of the future,' which no one but Dr Liszt is profound enough to understand [second subject quoted in music-type, but in key of B flat instead of B natural, and absurdly commencing a bar too soon]. Towards the end, this puerile, Frenchified, patchy tune is resumed, with all the pomp and stridency of the Wagnerian full orchestra (by which we mean one much noisier and much thinner than the legitimate full orchestra). The rest of the march, including some school-boy progressions, laid down with an infinite quantity of swagger and bombast, is quite worthy of the above; and, at the end, the violins are screaming up to B flat in *alt.*, with this kind of passage:—[mus. ex.] as is Mr Wagner's frequent and disagreeable custom. There is a 'future' for you—oh! musicians! Surely the '*as(s) in presenti*' is preferable."—The effrontery of the person who could write as if with a full score before him, suppressing the fact of its being nothing but a pfte version in another key: he is even unaware that the original has a chorus!

music." Both *Athenæum* and *Musical World* of the same day of issue thus conclude with the same expression, tho' the one writer (Chorley) gives it as a claim advanced by Wagner himself, the other as a belief of Liszt's. The main point, however, is the accumulation of evidence that Wagner's "existence" was pretty widely known in London musical circles *before* the Philharmonic directors met to appoint a conductor for their season of 1855: in fact, as indicated in our last extract, the *Athenæum* had devoted two long articles to *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* respectively in 1850 and 1852 (see App.).

We pass on to A. L. Jullien's concerts, still prior to that famous meeting, and find in the *Athenæum* of Nov. 18, 54: "Among M. Jullien's novelties at his Promenade Concerts [now in their third week] must be specified Herr Wagner's Overture to 'Tannhäuser,' which has been played two or three times, apparently without producing any sensation among the audience." Sensation or not, Jullien stuck to his colours,* and the overture can hardly have displeased this popular audience, or he would not have included it in his closing programme; concerning which the *M. World* of Dec. 16, 54, observes:—

The most successful of M. Jullien's annual series of concerts, since he inaugurated them in London, was brought to a termination on Saturday [9th]. The attendance was as numerous as that of any preceding night, and the enthusiasm as great . . . The English public are slow to perceive and slow to receive, and it is not until after repeated proofs of good intention and ability, that they yield their confidence. Now, M. Jullien did not take the British public by storm, but by insensible degrees, and by legitimate means insinuated himself into their good graces. While delighting, he was instructing; and while he induced his auditors to listen, he was gradually infusing into their minds a taste and liking for the best music. Therefore, although M.

* This genuine "first champion" is not so much as named in Praeger's book, but in his long letter of Nov. 55 to the *Neue Zeitschrift* (pubd Jan. 56) we find this hit below the belt: "Even that musical charlatan Jullien thought needful to flatter the Times-critic [how?], and said at a rehearsal for his Promenade Concerts, where he was performing the Tannhäuser-overture: 'Gentlemen, all we musicians know that this music of Wagner's, which is held in such incomprehensible esteem in Germany, is utter nonsense, something like the stuff I write for the people—but we must give it, mainly because I think of going to Germany to give concerts with my orchestra.'" How very credulous P. must have deemed his compatriots.

Jullien may not have deserved better of his public this year than before, his worth is more generally acknowledged, and his services more thoroughly appreciated. In this manner we can account for the steady progress M. Jullien has made with his audiences, and for the height which he has attained in popular estimation.

The programme of Saturday night presented no actual novelty. Wagner's overture to *Tannhäuser*, however, was repeated ; and as it again failed to render itself comprehensible, it certainly had all the effect of a novelty—which, perhaps, was the cause why M. Jullien re-introduced it. To those who incline to mystery, the overture to *Tannhäuser* may prove acceptable. We cannot give any opinion about it, since we really do not understand it. This was not the fault of the band or the conductor, whose exertions were worthy of a better cause. Seldom has a more perfect and vigorous performance been heard. Another, and more agreeable, feature of the programme, was the *Andante poco Adagio*, from the Symphony in D minor, by Mr. Bristow, an American composer of eminence in his own country, played for the second time in this country. The *Andante* is so well written and indicates so much real feeling for melody, that the whole symphony would have been acceptable.

I could not resist the temptation to continue as far as that contrast. What a difference half a century may make in point of view! Whereas the overture to *Tannhäuser* is played to-day more frequently than any other high-class instrumental piece, the whole world over, all that *Grove* has to tell us about the "American composer of eminence in his own country" is contained in two lines of a summary on Opera in the United States: "American composers have received but little encouragement from the managers. Three works—George Bristow's 'Rip van Winkle,' Niblo's Garden, New York, Sept. 27, 1855; W. H. Fry's 'Leonora' [etc.]—have been the most important productions: not one of these lived long beyond its birth."

If Davison proved a bad prophet in the *M. World*, we could not expect much better from him in the *Times* (Dec. 11, 54) :—

Among the achievements of the orchestra, certainly one of the finest M. Jullien has ever brought together, must be mentioned the *scherzo* from Mendelssohn's Midsummer Night's Dream, which was executed with a point and delicacy not to be surpassed, and Herr Richard Wagner's very singular overture to Tannhäuser. This last-mentioned work was introduced a year ago [nay: seven months] at the concerts of the New Philharmonic Society, but failed to please either the public or the critics, who in vain had been advised by the

German musical transcendentalists, with Franz Liszt at their head, that it belonged to the "music of the future," and that Herr Wagner, its composer, was living before his time, a prophet of the ultimate destinies of the art. It is to be regretted that M. Jullien, who, with equal faith and gallantry, has persisted in regaling his patrons from time to time with this wild and incoherent lucubration, and who, it cannot be denied, has been able to make it 'go,' as the musical term is, in spite of its almost insurmountable difficulties, with marvellous accuracy and precision, should have been no more successful than his predecessors and co-believers at St Martin's Hall [New Philh.]. Even the synopsis, printed in the bills, condensing Herr Wagner's own description of that which his overture is intended to convey—the life of man, the approach of love, the temporary victory of sense, and the final triumph of soul—is insufficient to create in the mind of the hearer those emotions of delight, that unbounded feeling of admiration, that thorough edification, in short, for which M. Liszt with Wagner himself in the foreground, have contended in so many unintelligible essays and with such a wealth of words and unconvincing eloquence. With the utmost deference for the opinion of modern Germany, we are compelled to adhere to our first opinion, that the overture to *Tannhäuser* is a piece of vapid rhodomontade and that, as Herr Wagner paints him, "the minstrel of love" is, after all, but a clamorous and empty personage. If the general ear of "the future" is destined to be afflicted with such music as this, it is to be hoped that charitable posterity will institute some extra hospitals for the deaf wherever Herr Wagner and his compositions are allowed to penetrate. Some of our readers may have heard of the story of an unfortunate gentleman at Berlin, who, visited with a loss of hearing for which no cure could be invented, was advised by his doctor, as a last hope, to go to the Opera and witness the performance of Spontini's *Olympia*. After the grand *finale* to the second act the patient turned quickly round to his medical attendant, and with joy in his countenance, exclaimed "Doctor, I hear!" But alas! what cured the patient killed the counsellor, who heeded not the words addressed to him. The doctor was deaf; he had taken his own medicine. We never hear the overture to *Tannhäuser* but this anecdote forcibly suggests itself as an illustration.

So we have traced the old anti-Wagnerian chestnut to its parent tree, but also proved that when Praeger boasts in his dedicatory preface, "In this country, I was Wagner's first and sole champion" —unless he can produce unimpeachable evidence anterior to 1854—he has ignored at least the sterling services of Louis Antoine JULLIEN, whose renderings of the Tannhäuser-overture so ardent a professed Wagnerian could never have failed to attend!

But let us get back to Prosper SAINTON. With Lüders as his house-mate—free to spend *his* evenings where he liked, and therefore to mingle in Jullien's audience as often as he pleased—the "existence" of the overture to *Tannhäuser*, and accordingly of its composer, could by no possibility be unknown to him at the end of 1854, whatever F. Praeger may say in 1888. However, if the smallest weight is to be attached to the assertions of the author of *Wagner as I knew him*, one would naturally give preference, however qualified, to a statement made by him less than a year after the event; so we will fish up his first public account of this vexed advocation.

In the *Neue Zeitschrift* of the 4th and 11th of January 1856 will be found an extremely long effusion "from London, November 1855," fully, in fact most farcically solemnly, signed "Ferdinand Praeger." Says P. here: "While the new [Philh.] society was progressing so happily, the horizon of the pigtail-bearing gentry of the old establishment was becoming ever narrower, and just as a man near his downfall grows blinder and blinder, they embroiled themselves with their conductor, Sig. Costa, so that they suddenly found themselves last year with no conductor. In the committee every conceivable continental conductor was proposed; the three above-named [Lindpaintner, Dr Wylde (!) and Berlioz] could not very well be taken from the New Philharmonic. However, I had spoken of Richard Wagner to the only intelligent artist who sat on the committee of the Old Philharmonic. 'The Art-work of the Future' and 'Opera and Drama' were known to him.—Although I myself had never seen Wagner conduct, yet I knew from competent persons what he achieved in that respect. His name was named to the committee, his appointment proposed as a *coup d'état*, and Mr Anderson, who is the soul of the Old Philharmonic, was sent to Zurich."—Here we see that Praeger himself makes no larger claim at the end of 1855, than the very modest one of having "spoken of Richard Wagner" to Sainton, and inferentially, of having alluded to the reports of unspecified "competent persons" that Wagner conducted well. There is no valid reason for our endorsing even that wee claim; but no faintest premonition are we given of the much-subsequent legend that the "sedate," erst "pigtail-bearing," directors sent out into the highways and dragged Praeger in as emergency-adviser. Excess of modesty? Nothing of the sort; for, speaking of Berlioz' engage-

ment by the New Philharmonic, he had said higher up in this letter, "I could easily prove that I gave the first impetus to this engagement"—as if it needed the impetus (*Anstoss*) of any outsider to negotiate with Berlioz, who had been conductor of that society's very first season (1852), not to mention his previous visits to London, beginning with 1848!

Well, well, as said before, the ancient minutes of the Old Philharmonic are no longer accessible, even if extant, so that the "vote of thanks" of later myth-development cannot be *officially* disproved; but we happen to have a contemporary account, somewhat highly-coloured no doubt, of the proceedings of the first annual meeting of Members *after* Wagner's departure from this country, and some instruction may be gleaned from that. Here is what the *Musical World* of July 14, 1855, embodies in a letter "to the Editor" signed "An English Musician," which, as it occupies three columns of leader type and employs the first person plural, may safely be attributed to that editor himself (from whose style its own is indistinguishable):—

The bubble has burst! The general meeting of the Philharmonic Society has taken place. Twenty-five members were present. Questions were put and answered. As was anticipated, nobody knew anything about anything . . . The meeting took place on Wednesday night [11th]. Mr Costa came early and looked prophetic. Mr Benedict appeared wrapped in a cloud of mystery. Mr Lindsay Sloper, with many papers, encouraged a hope that he was prepared to say no end of things—the act to follow the word, as thunder the lightning. Messrs Lucas and Clinton seemed as though something were 'looming' in the distance, not very pleasant to themselves—in expectation, as it were, of being placed upon the wheel and interrogated. Mr Sterndale Bennett entered, like Pistol in the play, and—to speak in metaphor—placed his sword upon the table. . . .

Mr Anderson was there, M. Sainton and the rest. But enough of names. Deeds ought rather to be on the *tapis*. It should be our grateful task to announce reforms, to predict the renovation of the Philharmonic Society, to reckon upon all sorts of fine things. Alas! —the whole ended in smoke. We have nothing to record worth telling. There was a great noise and a vast amount of talk. . . .

The whole proceedings were a mockery. Of course questions were asked about Richard Wagner, whose conducting has been so disastrous to the band. Nothing, however, was elicited but this—that he was proposed by Mr Clinton and seconded by Mr Lucas (or *vice versâ*), and that Messrs Lucas and Clinton, although they proposed and

seconded him, *had never heard of* Herr Wagner before! This, on cross-examination from the gentleman who arrived so hotly to the debate, so hotly disposed his sword upon the table, and so coolly took it up again, was acknowledged *without a blush!* But still worse, *without a blush*, six directors out of seven confessed that it had been unanimously agreed among them to invite *no resident professor, native or foreign, on any account whatever*, to direct the concerts. So that if Mr Anderson had failed to noose the "Man of the Future," there would have been no conductor at all (*tant mieux*—perhaps). Every German "Doctor," from Spohr of Cassel down to Liszt of Weimar, was to be asked, in turn, to undertake the post! Such a gross insult to the many eminent musical men who live in this metropolis was never practised before, and let us hope may never be tried again.

The 'accounts' passed muster, in spite of all this. Herr Wagner got £200; and Mr Anderson's expenses to Zurich and back again (in the snow) amounted to £30 more. The loss on the season was between £500 and £600. And yet three of the managing directors were retained in their places—Messrs Anderson, M'Murdie, and Lucas. M. Sainton, more consistent, declined in advance to serve.* Mr Sterndale Bennett, contrary to all expectation and in defiance of all reason, accepted office under Mr Anderson and tail. [Bennett, in fact, became conductor of the Philharmonic concerts for the next ten seasons; but that is a glimpse into the future, beyond the purview of the writer—who presently continues] . . . Mr Bennett, on laying his sword on the table, declined (like M. Sainton) to accept office. But on some trivial objection being removed, he took up his sword, as we have said, coquetted for a while, at length relented . . . Well would it have been for Mr Bennett had Mr Lindsay Sloper (his Mentor) taken a hint from the Odyssey, and tied him to the mast, as his ship sailed slowly past the Andersonian shores and quicksands. And what did Mr Sloper, with his papers? — *nothing*. And what did Mr Benedict?—no more. He simply cried "Peccavi!" and owned that, when he formed one in the directorate, it was he who *first* proposed that Richard Wagner should be invited over from the *Venusberg* of his imaginary "future," to conduct *Tannhäuser* at the Philharmonic Concerts. We wish some of the others were but half as candid as Mr Benedict [etc., etc., with nothing more of the remotest interest to us nowadays.]

So we have another candidate for the post of "first champion" in England. The list has swelled considerably: Henry Leslie, Lindpaintner, Jullien, Lucas, Clinton, Sainton, and now Mr (afterwards Sir Julius) Benedict. And all their claims seem

* The other three directors in 1854-5 were Clinton (flute—see above), Card (flute) and Joseph Williams (clarinet)—not so very "sedate" after all, then.

fairly well established, the claims of all these seven; but not a word of Ferdinand Praeger! Had he prompted Messrs Lucas and Clinton, too? and were they so gallant, after his denigration of the symphony of one of them (Wagner's 4th concert), as to decline to hand him over to the fury of the editor of the *Musical World?* * At anyrate his name can never have been so much as breathed at *this* historic meeting, or his recent tormentor would have jumped with glee at the opportunity of putting him on the rack again. Even Sainton's claim is somewhat dimmed by the above; but he seems to have sat mute and sphinx-like at this general meeting of a society with which he was about entirely to break connection (he never played for it again), and it is extremely probable that after "naming Wagner" in December 1854, he then preferred that the formal proposing and seconding should be done by two *English* members—even if the two operations did not occur at two separate meetings, the second of which he may easily have been detained from attending by his duties at Windsor. His "leap in the dark" description, on the other hand, is quite borne out by this account. A 'notoriety' was what the directors of 1854-5 were angling for, as set-off against Berlioz at the rival society; and if Messrs Lucas and Clinton were in such Cimmerian darkness as to have "*never heard of Herr Wagner before*" they proposed him (the italics are the *M. Wd's*, and well justified), of course they must have been prompted by some colleague on the board. Moreover, Sainton's claim is supported by the *M. World* itself May 3 next year, through an allusion to "Professor Anderson, who (at the suggestion of M. Sainton) when

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* Three weeks earlier than the above from the *M. World*, and thus confirming its allusion to Lucas and Clinton's "expectation of being placed upon the wheel," the *Athenæum* pries into the laws of the Old Philh., with this for peroration (June 23, 55—two days ere Wagner's final concert): "To point the moral of our inquiries, let us ask who controlled, or authenticated, or directly or indirectly sanctioned the engagement of Herr Wagner? At the time present, when this spirited measure has borne the fruits of all measures of party pique—disappointment, loss, disgrace to those who promoted it,—we hear of one director shifting the responsibility to another—of Mr A. declaring that it was all Mr B.'s fault—of Mr B. stoutly denying the charge, and assuring his congregation that so strange an appointment would never have happened, save from Mr C.'s representations. But what boots such 'fending and proving'?" Had Praeger's later tale been genuine, 'Heedless of grammar, they['d have] *all* cried, That's *Him!*'

Mr Costa seceded, dug Herr Wagner out of the snow at Zurich, and presented him to the Philharmonic Society 'as a compensation.'"

Just one more piece of London evidence, ere we shift the scene to Switzerland. I have suggested that with his letter of Nov. 55 to the German journal Praeger *began* his Philharmonic legend; that it was an actual earliest beginning, is proved, as plainly as negative testimony can prove anything, by the following letter printed in the *Musical World* of March 24, 55, i.e. only three months after the offer was sent to Wagner, and in a paper open to the eyes of *all* concerned:

SIR—Several times of late you have done me the distinguished honour of mentioning my name in connection with that of *Richard Wagner* and his "books."* It is "*the fact*" of *having* read those books which has convinced me that Wagner himself is entirely a stranger to all the machinations of that busy set of people, living at and near Leipzig, who put the oddest notions down to, and draw all kinds of undigested conclusions from, those books—of which Wagner did not even dream whilst writing them. Against that "set" I have given my decided protest at different occasions; and reiterated the same only as late as the Rotterdam Festival. They do not understand Wagner (as "*some others*," who will not understand him). It may be indifferent to you and your readers what I think of Wagner; but I am proud to acknowledge my admiration for his genius, and our mutual friendship. I am, moreover, firmly convinced that no one knows the works of the great masters, nor values and loves them more, than Wagner.

31 *Milton-street, Dorset-square.* FERDINAND PRAEGER.

Not a word, you see, to suggest that he had been in any way instrumental in introducing Wagner either to the Philharmonic Society or to England. But there is more in this letter than appears at first sight; read it carefully and you will see that the perusal of "those books" is quite of recent date (cf. note below), so recent that Praeger has not had time yet to revise his estimate of poor Brendel & Co. and the "machinations" of the pro-Wagnerian *Neue Zeitschrift*. Clearly there has been a conversion since that Rotterdam Festival, when the *whole* "set" so roused

* The date of their first mention is enlightening, viz. Feb. 17, 1855, when a recondite quip was toyed with thus: "We can scarcely believe the interpretations of Praeger, the soothsayer (although he will have Richard with him, and 'the books')." For Praeger's missed opportunity of proving a real familiarity with those "books," see p. 117 *inf.*—W. A. E.

his ire (without distinction between Wagner and the lesser "futures," as we shall learn in a moment). And the editor of the *M. World* leaves us in no doubt as to the suddenness of the change in the orbit of his quondam satellite, for he tilts at this letter with one of his most Aristophanic retorts: "Our correspondent lies under a misconception. The allusions were to Professor Praeger, of Hamm, who composed a treatise called *Parallax*, and a metrical fable entitled *Cowfinch and her Mother*. It is well known to the friends of this learned gentleman, that he has been recently employed in translating the three great 'books' of Richard Wagner into the Turkish language.—Ed. *M. W.*"—"Cowfinch and her Mother" is a gem because of its elusive inconsequence, but "Parallax" shimmers with meaning. Here is a dictionary definition: "The apparent change of position of an object relatively to other objects when viewed from different points." Could anything more completely expound this letter? Nothing so neatly, perhaps; yet something more comprehensibly to 'the general.' That something is this: On the 28th of April '55 the *M. World* answers a correspondent "Anti-future," in its playful way, "The London correspondent of the *New York Musical Gazette* is Professor Praeger, of Hamm. The Paris correspondent of the *New York Musical Gazette* is Professor Praeger, of Hamm. His duties require him to be ubiquitous; and he writes from Paris and London at the same moment.¶ {His London signature is *Trois Etoiles* . . . He praises Wagner to the skies, both from London and Paris," etc. The very next issue brings an enquiry: "Please tell me, is Professor Praeger, the correspondent of the New York *Musical Gazette*, 'Ferd. Praeger,' who told me a very different tale about Wagner at Rotterdam last year?—Yours etc., C. A. B., *Cologne*, May 1." The initials C. A. B. are too well known as those of a gentleman still living in the respect of the whole musical world, for any further comment to be needed, save that his question stayed unanswered.*

In F. Praeger's case Saul had suddenly become Paul, and we

* I have Mr C. A. Barry's written permission to give his name as author of this pointed enquiry (which he had not *meant* for publication), as also of the review in the *Musical Times* of April 1892 quoted p. 47 *sup.* Mr Barry himself made the journey from Cologne to Rotterdam on that "Rhine steamboat" in 1854, and was a party to the said discussion. His word will be doubted by no one.—W. A. E.

may congratulate him on the change most heartily; what we cannot congratulate him on, is his assertion that he had been Paul from the first, and the very first Paul.

What I have adduced above, will have proved the absurdity of the claim in Praeger's preface of 1885: "It was through *my sole exertions* that the Philharmonic Society in 1855 offered Wagner the post of conductor"; it will also have rendered it extremely improbable that he even suggested the offer in a casual way, still more so that "Lüders and I were heart and soul, and *catching my enthusiasm* he pressed Sainton so warmly, that the name of Wagner was at once proposed" (the italics in both cases are mine), for Praeger's "enthusiasm" has just been shewn to have the reverse of existed in 1854. But that is by no means the full length of his assertions. We have read his open letter of July 1888 (p. 46); commenting further thereon, Hueffer proceeds in his *Half Century*: "Mr Praeger is quite mistaken when he says, 'the first correspondence concerning the matter was between Wagner and myself.' Wagner had written to several friends on the subject; he had, indeed, practically accepted the offer of the Philharmonic Society before he even knew Mr Praeger's London address." That is a staggering blow, and Hueffer follows it up with irrefutable proofs. To those I shall have to return, but meantime it is necessary to bear in mind the circumstantiality with which Praeger repeats the assertion in that book which Hueffer never saw, as it was not published until some three years after the latter's death: "It having been decided that the directors were to make proposals to Richard Wagner, I wrote to him detailing the events that had occurred [i.e. that "I had attended at a directors' meeting in Hanover Square, and stated my views," etc.—two pages previously; why "Hanover Square" for a mere meeting of seven?] and stating that he might expect at any moment to receive a communication from the society. He did hear almost immediately, and on the 8th January, 1855, he wrote to me from Zurich." When we arrive at that actual *first letter* that ever passed between Wagner and Praeger, we shall see how categorically it disproves each single word preceding the last sentence I have quoted. The *first* communication re this business came direct to Wagner from the secretary of the Philharmonic, George Hogarth; and now that we are approaching *history*, I shall transfer the scene at last to Zurich.

The 28th of December 1854 writes Wagner to Liszt (undated letter 169, *W.-L. Corr.*): "The enquiry of the Philharmonic Society has come to me to-day from London,* whether I should be inclined to conduct their concerts for the approaching season. I have provisionally asked in reply—1°: whether they would have a second conductor for the makeweights (*Lumpereien*), and 2°: whether the orchestra would have to submit to as many rehearsals as I thought needful?—If they satisfy me upon all this, do you think I ought to accept? If I could earn a little money—without indignity—it would just about suit me. Please write me at once what you think of it."

We do not possess Hogarth's letter, but the French text of Wagner's answer stands published by Hueffer (*loc. cit.*) from the original autograph placed at his disposal by W. G. Cusins, conductor of the Philharmonic 1867-83. The following is a close translation:—

Sir,

In response to the honourable enquiry you address to me in the name of Messrs the Directors of the Philharmonic Society of London, I feel obliged to observe that, ere definitely deciding, it behoves me to know: 1°, if there would be a second conductor, in the capacity of 'Maître de Concert,' to direct the pieces for solo singers and instrumentalists, so that I should only have to conduct the larger works for orchestra or vocal ensemble? 2°, if the orchestra would be engaged on such conditions as would permit me, through the necessary number of rehearsals, to answer for a spirit of execution such as [alone] could determine me to occupy myself with public manifestations of my art?

Provided you are in a position to satisfy me perfectly on both these points, I declare myself ready to accept the engagement of the Philharmonic Society when it shall be offered me.†

Accept, Sir, the assurance of my distinguished esteem.

Zurich, 28. Dec. 1854. RICHARD WAGNER.

It taking between three and four days for letters to travel from

* Make no capital of "*the* enquiry" (*die Anfrage*), for the definite article is in no other modern tongue so strictly definite as in the English, and Wagner afterwards tells August Roeckel that the said enquiry took him wholly by surprise (see p. 94 *inf.*).

† Here we have a perfectly simple explanation of the seeming discrepancy between Sainton's statement, that it was he who "named Wagner," and the fact that Messrs Lucas and Clinton were the eventual proposer and

Zurich to Weimar then, Liszt's answer of Jan. 1, 55, must have been sent by return of post, and Wagner would receive it about the 5th. In this letter of Jan. 1 Liszt says: "The offer of the Philharmonic Society is quite acceptable, and your friends will rejoice at it. . . . Presumably the affair will turn out to your satisfaction; yet if you will allow me, I recommend a little caution and the wearisome but useful method of expectancy." As Liszt's answer suggests the need of circumspection, and Wagner knows nothing of London ways, Wagner writes next day, Jan. 6, to J. A. Roeckel, father of his old Dresden friend August—Roeckel senior having quite recently paid him a visit at Zurich (as the prisoner is informed next February). This letter Hueffer, after personal inspection, thus summarises in his *Half a Century:* "Wagner states that he has written to Mr Hogarth, secretary of the Philharmonic Society, accepting their terms [?] subject to the two conditions mentioned in the text. He then goes on to say: 'I have not yet received their answer; but provided I really go to London, I reckon, of course, upon your friendly counsel' (Mr Roeckel had been in London as Manager of the German Opera *). 'I have also thought of Ferdinand Praeger, and should be very pleased if he would look after my affairs very carefully; for besides him, I really do not know anybody in London, nor do I intend to make many acquaintances there. At all events, kindly let me have Praeger's address. I scarcely know whether I ought to wish that the matter should come to something.'"—The bearing of the enquiry for Praeger's address will be manifest, in face of that gentleman's assertion that he had *already* written Wagner foreshadowing this very offer; moreover, one does not say "I have thought of" a person, if he has already obtruded himself: clearly, he occurs to Wagner's mind as a possible business-agent, so to speak, in this strange country. However, that question will very soon be settled in the

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seconder. The first advance to Wagner was clearly in the nature of an informal feeler, and it is quite conceivable that Sainton was unable to attend that meeting of the directors when it was seriously *resolved* to send Anderson to Zurich to secure the prize—or prey.

* His own speculation, seasons 1832-4. As I am politely informed by his youngest son, Joseph Leopold (born in London 1838—residing at Clifton for many years past), "Papa Roeckel" continued to live in London till 1845, when he removed to York, remaining there till his return to Germany in 1853. —W. A. E.

most positive of ways, whilst we shall also learn the preciser meaning of "Besides him, I really do not know anybody in London." (N.B.—We are not furnished with the German text).

"Papa" Roeckel answers forthwith:—

Basle, St. Alban's Thorgasse No. 1262
Sunday, 7th of 55.*

Most valued Friend,

There will be no objection to fulfil your first requirement—that of having a 2nd conductor for the lesser things; but a fulfilment of your 2nd demand is an impossibility—which lies beyond the province of the Philharmonic. If it is your object to bring your works out worthily in London, undoubtedly this is the best opportunity—always excepting the performance of your operas on the stage itself (*which would be still better*); but even for this latter you would be able to negotiate and prepare in person there—you would find contractors on the spot, and there would be no lack of competent German singers male and female the summer through, when they all have more or less leave. The best would be for you to write at once to Praeger, and get him to enquire of Hogarth why you have had no answer. The latter would then reply that, with the best of will, the Philharmonic is unable to entertain your 2nd condition—when Praeger can explain that you merely want to be certain of *such* rehearsals as are indispensable for good performance of the works,—and so the matter can be arranged. You must bear in mind that the works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, are so familiar to the *admirable* orchestra of the Philharmonic that *one* rehearsal abundantly suffices for them; consequently it is nothing but a question of *your own* compositions, and as this is the *chief* consideration to the Philharmonic themselves—since all else has lost the zest of novelty—they will do *their utmost* to procure you the needful rehearsals. Even at the 2nd Philharmonic [the New]—where the orchestra was new and less expert—Berlioz gave his certainly very difficult music with honour and success; yet the composition of a Frenchman, even if thoroughly German [in character], will never find the same approval with the English as the work of a German himself.

Praeger's address is
Ferd. Praeger Esqre
31 Milton Street, Dorsetsquare
London.

* From the German verbatim copy included in H. S. Chamberlain's *Echte Briefe*, a reprint from the *Bayreuther Blätter* of February 1894. Praeger merely alludes to the letter, in his book, but does not quote from it, tho' he religiously preserved it in the same well-worn envelope as Wagner's of Jan. 8, 55, to himself.

As Praeger occupies a whole house to himself, I am sure it would give him great pleasure if you and your wife were to alight there,—Eduard and wife always do so when they visit London. In that way you would not need to hurry your selection of a lodging.—If you write to Praeger, please give him my kind regards.—Benedict, also, will try to be obliging to you, but is always very busy, particularly in the season.

Hearty greetings from us all!

Yours very sincerely

ROECKEL.

So Benedict's confession, made at a time and in circumstances when it was highly unpopular, has every appearance of historic truth. But we will leave *that* "first champion in England"—whom, oddly enough, we shall not meet again except with Meyerbeer—and ask how it was that Wagner came to know of Praeger at all, though unaware of his address. We may brush aside the whole story of a lively correspondence between Parallax and *August* Roeckel while the latter was at Dresden, as a transparent myth;* if they met at all—and Praeger neither tells us when nor where—they never can have struck close friendship. This is obvious even from Wagner's letter to August of Feb. 5, 55: "If you answer me, address your letter to *London*, c/o *Ferdinand Praeger*, 31 *Milton Str. Dorset-Square.* Your father, who has behaved most amiably to me, recommended Praeger to me; I shall descend at his house for the first,"—not a word about Your most intimate friend, to whom you used to report the minutest details of our Dresden talks (*Wagner as I knew him* 119 and 131), but simply "Your father recommended him to me." Similarly, when Wagner answers August from London itself, he neither conveys any greeting from, nor acknowledges any for conveyance to Praeger, but polishes him off in three quizzical words (237*n infra*).

* I had prepared a "note" of some two dozen pages on this subject and its much later sequelæ, for the Appendix; considerations of space forbid its appearance, in *this* vol. at any rate, but the reader may slake his thirst for facts with a telling ounce of evidence from Herr Glasenapp's second volume:—One of these alleged letters from August Roeckel printed in Praeger's book, and assigned to the Spring of 1844 ("March" in the Eng. ed., "May" in the Ger.), says, "Since then [Wagner's return from Berlin, mid-Jan.] we have had 'Hans Heiling' and 'Vampyr.'" Alas! they *had* had *Hans Heiling* Jan. 26, 44, but—the *Vampyr* was not on the Dresden repertory at all for many a year on each side of it.

Yet the letter to Papa Roeckel, just read, does suggest some antecedent familiarity with the name and "existence" of worthy Mr Praeger, quite apart from the likelihood of the old gentleman's having mentioned it on his late visit to Zurich. If not through an intimacy between Praeger and August, then, how are we to account for this?—Most simply. Mme Praeger herself, now also deceased, has informed us (*Mus. Standard* '94): "When I came to this country from Paris in February 1848, the day before the French Revolution broke out, I, my husband and Edward Roeckel, the brother of August, lived in the same house. We formed one family." *When* the acquaintance with Edward first was made, we are not informed; but *Grove* tells us "In 1848 Mr [E.] Roeckel settled in England," also that he previously "came to London in 1835, and gave his first concert in 1836 at the King's Theatre," whereas we hear that Praeger himself settled in London as early as 1834. What with Papa Roeckel's long residence here (p. 64*n*) and his son's occasional visits to him, it is easy to guess how Edward and Ferdinand, both pianists, may have come into contact long ere 1848. Then, as Edward had in the meantime been touring all Germany, nothing would be more likely than that he should have met Wagner in company of brother August at Dresden, also that in letters passing *between the two brothers* the name of Wagner should occur from time to time.

Anyhow Wagner *did* know Edward Roeckel, and quite certainly would hear from August while at Dresden the name of the gentleman with whom August's brother was temporarily "forming one family." After the insurrection of 1849, however, that link was broken to this extent that, wishing to write to Edward on behalf of a protégé of his own and August's, in March 1851 Wagner does not even know Edward's address, and has to "take my chance of a letter reaching you" on a roundabout route. The letter did reach Edward (then already at Bath), and in a copy attested by himself we read: "As the orchestras of the London theatres are recruited at this time of year, he [the protégé] believes there is a chance of engagement: only, neither he nor I know anyone at all in London who could be of use to him for that. . . . As my young friend unfortunately can speak no English yet, we should also be very grateful for an indication where he could alight at first, live reasonably, and also make himself understood.

Perhaps one might commend him to somebody like Praeger." There is nothing derogatory in the expression "somebody like Praeger," but it clearly shews the only knowledge Wagner had of him, namely as someone who would not object to take a 'paying guest,' even though he might be unable to do anything further for him. And Praeger proved better than Wagner's expectation of him, for he (P.) tells us: "I should add that Hainberger came to London in April 1851, stayed with me, and that I secured for him lessons and a place in the orchestra of the New Philharmonic" (apparently in 1852, through P.'s friend Dr Wylde, the conductor in ordinary).

The above will have served a double purpose, for it explains not only a part of the correspondence between Papa Roeckel and Wagner, but also the whole opening sentence of our most complete evaporator of the Philharmyth (I *must* condense that term), to wit the actual first letter that ever passed between Wagner and Praeger himself. Down to this point we can make every allowance for a halting memory; from this point the affair assumes a graver aspect, with which I shall deal when we have reached the letter's end :—

Dear Sir,

Presumably you know that I am already acquainted with you—through the Röckels—also, no doubt, that I know I am beholden to you. Well, in an affair which the enclosed letter of Papa Röckel's will bring to your understanding at once, I must address myself to you direct: you will perceive that I have been asked by the secretary of the Philharmonic Society in London whether I am inclined to conduct their concerts in the coming season. I have posed two conditions: 1°, a second conductor; 2°, engagement of the orchestra for *several* rehearsals of each concert. You will see what old Mr Röckel, to whom I reported this, has to say to the contrary. Should *you* agree with his advice, I am ready to stand back from my second requirement; and in that case I would beg you to discuss the matter in my name with Mr Hogarth (secretary of the Ph. Soc.), and to arrange so far that nothing would be left to decide save the question of fee, for which I next should ask your friendly counsel.—In fact, what disposes me to the resolve to go to London at all, is particularly the hope of your support, which—entirely unfit as I am for whatever may really be needful—I should have to draw on to a very large extent.

Therefore if you feel adventurous enough to freight yourself with me, please be so kind as to say so, and then see for yourself how you

fare with me (*mit mir auskommen*). I am in the plight of being much compelled to wish to earn a decent sum for once: I should like to see how far it is possible without lending myself to rascalities (*Schlechtigkeiten*).

Do not be vexed with me for plumping upon you like this! Rather, accept my petition with kindness, and act in my name as yourself shall think good.

I shall be heartily glad, however, to become more intimate with you through such an opportunity.

With best regards

Zurich — Yours faithfully

8 Jan. 1855. — RICHARD WAGNER.

(I received Hogarth's letter 12 days since: I wrote at once, but to this day have had no answer; probably for the reason conjectured by Röckel).

Now, that letter was in Praeger's possession when he wrote his book; there it, or rather a caricature of it, is printed immediately after the words I quoted on page 62 as to his having written to Wagner "stating that he might expect at any moment to receive a communication from the society. He did hear almost immediately, and on the 8th of January, 1855, he wrote to me from Zurich." Not a loophole for doubt is there: this *is* the letter of Jan. 8, 55; but where is the faintest hint in it of Praeger's having written first? Quite the reverse: Wagner not only has formally to introduce himself, but to broach the Philharmonic business as something Praeger could not be expected to have heard about as yet—the "enclosed letter of Papa Röckel's" is to explain it to the gentleman whom Wagner had "thought of" as a business intermediary; there is even a suggestion of prospective reward in it, though I will not press that delicate point, as it is too gingerly put for Praeger himself to have noticed, and I feel sure that his answer would waive it at once if he had. A certain acquaintanceship of an indirect kind "through the Röckels"—not through "August," mind you—is politely claimed, and a past service acknowledged (the housing etc. of Hainberger); but in every other respect it is an absolute breaking of fresh ground, the *commencement* of direct relations with a stranger. How is it possible to reconcile this letter with the manifold romance which Praeger's book has made lead up to it? There can only be one answer.

But how does that book reproduce this first letter? Entirely

omitting the text of the enclosure from Papa Roeckel, with its tell-tale address, *Wagner as I knew him* gives this first direct communication between Wagner and Praeger in a form which not the utmost carelessness or inexpertness of translation can possibly account for. Besides minor changes in its second half, the first is *doctored* out of recognition, and clumsily doctored too. I wish to be quite clearly understood: Wagner's *autograph* remains intact, and undefaced, in the possession of the blameless personage to whom Praeger sold it after writing his book *—but that book presents a mistranslation most impudently falsifying the sense of the original. Further, Praeger's German book does not reproduce Wagner's diction at all, but retro-translates into journalese German, and *with additional variants*, the falsified form of this letter contained in the English! As that bare statement is enough to make one's brain reel, I will not confuse the reader by pursuing the question of the retro-translation until I have finished with the appalling discrepance between the original document and its form as given in *Wagner as I knew him.* Here is the opening half of that unblushing parody, which I confront with Wagner's written words, lest anyone should doubt the fidelity of my rendering overleaf:—

(*Wagner writes:*)

Verehrtester Herr!

Sie wissen vermuthlich, dass ich mit Ihnen—durch die Röckel's—bereits bekannt bin, auch wohl, dass ich weiss, dass ich Ihnen verpflichtet bin. In einer Angelegenheit, die Ihnen der beiliegende Brief des Papa Röckel sofort zum Verständniss bringen wird, muss ich mich nun direct an Sie wenden: Sie ersehen, dass ich vom Secretair der philharmonischen Gesellschaft in London befragt worden bin, ob ich geneigt sei, die Conzerte derselben in der

(*Praeger edits:*)

I enter into correspondence with you, my dear Praeger, as with an old friend. My heartiest thanks are due to you, my ardent champion in a strange land and among a conservative people. Your first espousal of my cause, ten years ago, when August[1] read to me a vigorous article, from some English journal,[2] by you on the "Tannhäuser" performance at Dresden, and the several evidences you have given subsequently of a devotion to my efforts, induce me to unhesitat-

* This is admitted by all parties concerned, as regards the English book, though the German version (*Wagner wie ich ihn kannte*—"translated by the author") is claimed to have been written after that sale.

bevorstehenden Saison zu dirigiren. Ich stellte zwei Bedingungen. 1.° ein zweiter Dirigent. 2.° Engagement des Orchesters zu *mehreren* Proben von jedem Conzert. Sie sehen, was mir der alte Röckel, dem ich diess berichtete, dagegen vorstellt und anräth. Geben auch *Sie* ihm recht, so bin ich bereit, von meiner zweiten Forderung zurückzustehen; und für diesen Fall würde ich Sie ersuchen, als in meinem Namen die Sache mit Herrn Hogarth (Secretär der Ph. G.) zu besprechen und soweit zu ordnen, dass nur noch der Honorarpunkt zu erledigen wäre, für welchen ich dann Sie um Ihren freundlichen Rath bäte.—

[*From Mr H. S. Chamberlain's copy in the* Bayreuther Blätter *of February* 1894, *checked in the following May by myself and the attorney of the letters' present owner, and found correct in the minutest particular.—W. A. E.*]

ingly throw the burden of somewhat wearisome arrangements upon your shoulders, as papa Roeckel[3] urges me in a letter which I enclose.

I must tell you that before concluding arrangements with the directors of the Philharmonic, I imposed two conditions: first, an under conductor; secondly, the engagement of the orchestra for several rehearsals for each concert. You may imagine how enchanted I am at the promised break of this irritating exile, and with what joy I look forward to an engagement wherein my views might find adequate expression; but frankly, I should not care to undertake a journey all the way to London only to find my freedom of action restricted, my energies cramped by a directorate that might refuse what I deem the imperatively necessary number of rehearsals; therefore, am I willing to agree with what papa Roeckel advises, if it meets, too, with your support, viz. to forego the engagement of a second conductor. In such an event, I would beg of you to talk over, in my name, this affair with Mr. Hogarth,[4] and so far to arrange that only the question of honorarium be left open for settlement, for which I would then ask your friendly counsel.*

[* Footnotes to this page 222 of *Wagner as I knew him:* "[1] Roeckel. [2] English Gentleman. [3] August's father. [4] Secretary of the Philharmonic Society."]

Even a tape-measure will convince the most casual reader what an amazing liberty has here been taken by this reproducer and biographist: the original text has swelled to almost double,

through outrageous interpolations. Let me first deal, however, with the minor changes. *Verehrtester Herr*, the formal mode of addressing a perfect stranger, becomes "my dear Praeger"; "before concluding arrangements with the directors" has *no* equivalent in the original, but helps to tint the myth aforesaid; Wagner is made to express his willingness "to forego the engagement of a second conductor," by the advice of Papa Roeckel, whereas old Roeckel had foretold him that there would be *no* difficulty on that head and Wagner had declared his readiness to stand back from his "second *requirement*," i.e. that concerning "several rehearsals for each concert"; the name of "August" is introduced, in support of what I can only term the Augustine myth (for A. R.'s name occurs in no *certified* letter of Wagner's to Praeger yet made known); whilst Wagner's bracketed denotation of Hogarth is thrust out of the letter itself and degraded into one of Praeger's footnotes—such an explanation standing much in the way of the myth-builder, it must be given merely to his readers, not to *himself* by Wagner.

But there are two much bigger glosses introduced in the above without a shadow of foundation in Wagner's text. The second is frankly idiotic, "You may imagine how enchanted I am . . . and with what joy I look forward" etc., seeing that Wagner's next letter (of only ten days later) tells Praeger, "In any case I am conscious that I am bringing a sacrifice," whilst that of Jan. 6 to old Roeckel had said, "I scarcely know whether I ought to wish that the matter should come to something." The first big gloss, upon the other hand, bristles with purposeful fiction: "my ardent champion," forsooth, when Praeger had been running down the so-called "music of the future" so recently as the last July, to our positive knowledge! Of course Wagner knew nothing of *that*, but it would have been impossible for him to hear of a championship that nowhere commenced until after this letter. Then into Wagner's pen is foisted a remark about "your first espousal of my cause, ten years ago, when August read to me a vigorous article, from some English journal, by you on the 'Tannhäuser' performance at Dresden." The awkwardness of construction may or may not be intentional, but we are coolly asked to believe that Praeger, who "had never seen Wagner conduct" (so he tells the *N. Z.* next November), actually wrote an account of the said performance to "some English journal," specified in his footnote as the *English*

Gentleman. Was his astral body careering eyeless at Dresden in 1845? We have heard him speak of this same "article" in 1888 as one upon *Rienzi*, but that is a detail compared with the grotesqueness of the larger claim. What has become of the chameleon article in the "English Gentleman"? Twelve years ago I did my best to get a sight of it, and this is what I reported to the *Musical Standard* of March 17, 1894: "After a prolonged search, the officials at the British Museum at last dug out for me a volume containing certain numbers of the *English Gentleman*, bound up with an olla podrida of oddments. The second half of the paper's title is scarcely reassuring as to the quality of its art-criticisms, but, for better or worse, here it is:—*The English Gentleman and Sportsman's Journal.* Unhappily the journal—or rather, weekly—appears either to have died a sudden death, or to have staggered on unknown to fame; for the British Museum possesses no copy of it later than the eleventh, namely for Sunday, June 7, 1835." At that time I challenged Mr Praeger's defenders to produce or attest a later copy, but nobody has come forward with one, though the British Museum can never be accused of inhospitality toward even the most obscure of British-published periodicals.

Mention *by Wagner* of this two-headed article having been ocularly proved a downright substitution, what about its adduction by Praeger himself? Though we have witnessed the apparent demise of the suckling *English Gentleman* in 1835 (just a year after Praeger's settlement in this country), yet, as I pointed out in the said issue of the *M. Standard*, the German *Neue Zeitschrift* of Dec. 2, 1845, tells us in its column for small talk, "From London we have the following '. . . Among the journals here the weekly paper *The English Gentleman* distinguishes itself by a searching, but impartial criticism of music; next to the *Morning Post*, it also gives the quickest and completest news about the musical life of the Continent.'" As the title-page of vol. 23 of the *N. Z.*, July to Dec. '45, is the first that bears the name of Ferdinand Praeger in its list of accredited correspondents, we may reasonably assign this scrap of "news" to him; but its mention of the *English Gentleman* abides in solitary splendour. What are we to say to it? In any case it was farcical to couple with the *Morning Post* a rag not garnered for our national archives save ten years previously; but may not this one reference, revived to Praeger's

memory in his search for biographic straw, have started the whole *Tannhäuser* fable? Possibly a fresh journal crept into existence under the name of *English Gentleman* in 1845, and struggled through a timorous issue or two; possibly Praeger himself administered "impartial criticisms" to its pining columns; possibly those "impartial criticisms" choked it,—but in the absence of more reliable evidence I must be pardoned if I view that same "vigorous article" with the gravest suspicion, more especially as Praeger can tell us nothing further about it in his chapter on the events of 1845 than this: "Of the music and the performance of 'Tannhäuser' in October, 1845, at Dresden, I wrote a notice for a London periodical, called the 'English Gentleman.' This was the first time, I believe, that Wagner's name was mentioned in England." Never having seen Wagner conduct, and therefore having never attended a performance of *Tannhäuser* at Dresden, how could P. write of this music with personal knowledge unless one of its newly lithographed full scores, not then on sale, had been despatched to him? Had the latter been the case, we may trust him to have bragged about it; but he does not draw the bow that length. Wherefore—unless we are to accept his alternative reading, and call the work *Rienzi* (whose pfte score *was* published Sept. 1844)—all that Praeger could possibly have contributed on "Tannhäuser at Dresden" to an *English Gentleman redivivus* must have been a crib from the then anti-Wagnerian *N. Zeitschrift's* own two-number screed against that opera (see vol. ii, 385-7), for which poor Wagner could scarcely owe him "heartiest thanks."—

This peerless gloss next proceeds to make Wagner speak of "the several evidences you have given subsequently of a devotion to my efforts." Where are those evidences? From 1850 onward the *Neue Zeitschrift* itself notoriously became an active partisan of Wagner and his principles, so that its correspondents need go in no fear of their Wagnerian leanings; on the other side, Praeger still nominally remains its London correspondent, though his contributions grow rarer and rarer till toward the end of 1851, when they cease entirely, whilst his very name drops off the title-page from the second half-yearly volume for 1853 onward, not reappearing until *after* his personal introduction to Wagner in 1855. Well, how does this London correspondent "evidence devotion to Wagner's efforts" during the whole of that

period? As I have already answered that question in the *Musical Standard* aforesaid, permit me to quote myself once more: "I imposed on myself the tedious task of reading everything Praeger had written to that paper [*N. Z.*] in the ten years preceding Richard Wagner's trip to London, and only once did I come across the name of Wagner. It was in the issue for July 30, 1850: 'As yet not a single note of Berlioz, Schumann, Gade, Wagner and others, has been heard in the Philharmonic Concerts, albeit Mendelssohn long ago recommended pressingly a symphony of Gade's.' Curiously enough, all three of Wagner's companions (in that notice) reappear in September '51: 'People refuse to hear anything of* Schumann and Gade, despite my repeated appeals (*Anfragen*) to just give them a trial!—There was a plan for an opposition society, with Berlioz as conductor; however, it came to nothing;' but Wagner has dropped out of the quartet, you see. So that, prior to the receipt of Wagner's first letter to him, Praeger's 'championship' consisted of one reference to 'Wagner and others' in a German journal, and an article about one doesn't know what in an undiscoverable English paper." To which I may add that Praeger follows up the account of his alleged meeting with the "seven sedate gentlemen" whom his "red-hot enthusiasm" so remarkably "influenced," by this statement: "The crusade in favour of Richard Wagner, upon which I then entered with so much fervour, will be best understood by an article contributed by me at the time to the 'New York Musical Gazette,'[1]" his "1" referring us to a footnote, "24th February 1855." †

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* As Praeger is talking of the Old Philharmonic, it would have been more correct for me to say, "They will have nothing to do with," or "They refuse to hear of" (*Von Schumann und Gade will man nichts wissen*).—W. A. E., 1905.

† This wildly rambling article (unsigned) is reprinted, apparently at full length, on the next page of *Wagner as I knew him.* A considerable extract therefrom stands also quoted in the London *Musical World* of May 12, 55, where it is not unjustly stigmatised as "indecorous and miserable balderdash to which we shall not deign to answer one syllable." Strange to relate, the *M. Wd's* Vienna correspondent had previously contributed to its issue of March 31 "the following extract from the London correspondence of the *Neue Wiener Musikzeitung*," the said extract beginning "LONDON.—The musical public of the Capital is in a state of great excitement" etc.—i.e. the actual words of Praeger's opening, slight allowance made for a twofold translation—and continuing with sentences equally the twins of Praeger's, until we arrive at a startler: "Will this sober, classical public vacillate and

By his own confession, then, he *began* his crusade a few weeks after the great man first honoured him with a letter; yet he makes that very letter call him "my ardent champion in a strange land and among a conservative people" (the Americans are *so* conservative).

After the above, it may sound trifling to remark that in the second half of the letter P. alters Wagner's "hope of your support" into "the certainty of your help," and that he translates "*Ihr ergebener*"—the ordinary formal "yours faithfully," or "yours very truly"—into "yours heartily." But even these amendments, more particularly the "certainty," have manifest purpose, and we thus have witnessed an extremely serious instance of an almost inaccessibly private historic document garbled from beginning to end *ad majorem gloriam recipientis.*

Nor does this garbling finish with the English version. The German book, "translated by the author from the English" (see title-page), instead of giving a faithful transcript of each thitherto-personal autograph in its original diction, absolutely translates the Praeger-English version of Wagner's letters into Praeger-German! Such a procedure, I should opine, had never been adopted before by an author outside the walls of Bedlam; yet it has been justified by the deceased's defenders as the outcome of necessity.* Even had the English version been the

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grow giddy, or will it disown these crack-brained individuals [Wagner and Berlioz], and get rid of them as soon as possible? We shall see"—the Vienna correspondent appending a note to the term "individuals," to wit, "The German word is *Schwindler*, a nasty word, and a libellous word, rather—in one sense at least. I have preferred the milder signification." Now, who was that London correspondent, and was he hedging, or simply airing elephantine sarcasm?—Almost stranger is the sentence with which Praeger concludes his own quotation from himself, after a lineful of asterisks: "Wagner is at Zurich, quietly industrious, and does not even know or care about the hue and cry concerning him, which is raised by a set of idlers, who wish to identify themselves with something new and great; being nothing themselves, nor ever likely to be anything" (*W. as I knew him* p. 221). Surely P. has naively annexed some editorial comment!

* "Mr Praeger was bound by contract to complete a German version by a certain date. As I [his widow] have already stated, some twenty of the original letters had been parted with after the English book was finished and before the commission for the German was given. At the time Mr Praeger was writing the German, the owner of these letters was some thousands of miles away. In order to fulfil his contract Mr Praeger evidently rendered the

very loyalest translation in the first place, it would have been a defiance of all literary canons to attempt to reconstruct from it the German text; but with a translator so unpunctilious as I have just proved P. to be, this retro-translation—unavowed by a single word of warning, unless we are meant to subsume it under the general category "translated by the author from the English" —amounts to sacrilege. On that page 219 I have so often quoted from the English book, P. says he "had become so wholly [Wagner's] partisan as to regard him the genius of the age"; yet he can offer to Wagner's fellow-countrymen, in guise of the actual words this genius penned to him, the most slipshod bastard-German sentences that ever droned from a cosmopolitan press! Needless to say, they were swallowed by the Hanslicks and Lindaus without a wince; but to what a depth must German criticism have sunk, if it could believe that Wagner ever wrote "und werde ich vielfachen Gebrauch Ihrer Güte reklamiren," or "so agiren Sie in meinem Namen"—both of which gems occur in Praeger's German travesty of this first letter!

However, saving in so far as style is itself a proof of fact, we are here more concerned with facts than style, and what the English reader will now demand to know, is whether the letter's *substance* has been affected by this second process of translation.

English of the letters back into German. Had the originals been in his possession or obtainable in any way, undoubtedly they would have been inserted. Mr Praeger had nothing to gain by such a course, but everything to lose, both time and trouble. Had the German proofs been sent to Mr Praeger when alive, or to his family after death, most assuredly the originals would have been substituted for the German from the English. I cannot but express surprise that neither the publishers nor the owner acquainted the family with the projected publication" (*Mus. Standard* Apr. 21, 94). Naturally I share the surprise expressed in this last sentence, but, as I then pointed out in rejoinder, not only was "the owner of these letters" the same individual as that with whom the "contract" had been made, and therefore most directly interested in its being fulfilled in a proper spirit, but, with one significant exception, even the quotations from Wagner's already *published* writings had been similarly retro-translated. As a witty Austrian reviewer once asked, had that owner also locked away, or taken with him on his voyage, the whole edition of Wagner's *Gesammelte Schriften?* Blanks should of course have been left in the MS. translation of the book, to be filled up on return of "the owner," who was "away" for a few months almost every year. As it is, we are strongly reminded of that extraordinary London parody of the *Tannhäuser*-march, when a pianoforte derangement was actually re-scored (by whom, is immaterial) for a public amateur performance (p. 52 *sup.*).

It has, and in the same direction. The English does not appear to have quite come up to Praeger's notion of a thoroughly waterproof myth; the German book has to improve on it. "I enter into correspondence with you, my dear Praeger," was not a fully satisfying variant of the sense of the original; it left it open to us to suppose that the person who "enters into" is also the person who *begins* the "correspondence": so the German simply reads the colourless "*Ich schreibe Ihnen, mein lieber Praeger*" ("I write to you, my dear Praeger"). Then, whereas the English book had said, "Therefore am I willing to agree with what papa Roeckel advises, if it meets, too, with your support," the German twists it to the right-about: "*Wenn jedoch der alte Roeckel auch Ihrer Meinung ist, so würde ich*" etc. ("However, if old Roeckel is also of your opinion, I should" etc.); which—as Praeger does not print old Roeckel's letter, and now suppresses the "which I enclose"—would lead the unwary to believe that P. had already given Wagner *his* opinion, and the latter merely wished him to get it endorsed by Papa R., who might himself be in London for all that the reader is told to the contrary. To complete the picture, what had been in Wagner's autograph a "hope" (p. 76 *sup.*), and in Praeger's English a "certainty," mounts in P.'s German to an "assurance" from Praeger himself (*Versicherung*), leaving the said unwary in *no* doubt now that Praeger *had* commenced the correspondence, as misstated in "the author's" context. Finally, besides a few other retouches, the picture is framed with Wagner's desire to become "still more closely acquainted with you" (*noch genauer mit Ihnen bekannt*); whereas the English had correctly said "more intimate" (*vertrauter* is Wagner's word—no "*noch*"), as one might gracefully remark to an indirect acquaintance of whom one was asking a favour.—

Well, to quote a statesman's famous query, what do you think of it? Not a very reassuring specimen of this biographer's handiwork? We are not likely to hear much from this witness's mouth on which we can implicitly rely?—Precisely. And that is why I have spent so much valuable time and space on exposure of the Philharmyth and its concomitants. When we arrive at London itself, we shall have to get some friendly constable to check the information volunteered by this traditional cicerone at every step.

Yet we must not be unjust to Ferdinand Praeger, and argue from this worthless book, or brace of books (the German publisher has publicly withdrawn his twin from circulation), to "the author's" private character. Even in the fifties he seems to have been a little addicted to what the vulgar call 'gassing,' and somewhat of a journalistic ranter; but it was an age when words for print were not so scrupulously weighed as now—in the English press at least. Then when it came to the writing of these terrible twin Its, the man's life had been soured by professional toil and disappointments: at a time of life, past three score years and ten, when most of us should be dreaming snugly by the fireside, when many of us are not entirely responsible for all we say or do, when sight is dim and memory blurred—he was rashly asked to write for generous emolument a book of reminiscences. Though no language can be severe enough in condemnation of the outcome, let us still remember that its "author" was a kind, though by no means a discreet or tactful, friend to Wagner when he did arrive in our stand-off metropolis. In F. Praeger's case we must absolutely divorce the writer from the man.

To return to our history of the London offer, we know from the London postmark on the envelope of that letter of Wagner's of Jan. 8, 55, that it reached Praeger's house on the 11th: his consternation we may imagine, as he allowed three days to elapse before answering (judging by Wagner's reply). He tells us in his book that he had "hitherto been on terms of friendship" with James Davison—"quite intimate friends," the German edition says—and "the power of this gentleman was enormous"; even in 1854 Davison had stiffened his neck against Wagner's music and scoffed at his art "of the future," as seen: for Praeger to throw in his lot with Wagner, meant his severing all connection with the *Musical World*, unless he could manage also to convert its self-opinionated editor; it also meant a likelihood of his own compositions being no longer patted on the back, and the branding of himself as renegade. It really was a tragic parting of the ways, thrust suddenly upon him by an unreflecting 'mutual friend' (old Roeckel), and had he been content to hint the change of flag thus unexpectedly demanded of him, instead of posing as a hardened veteran, our admiration for his pluck had been unstinted. For it was a plucky act, to take this "leap in the dark" and

identify himself, however subordinately, with the object of his own and most other London critics' ridicule, when it might ultimately affect his supply of bread and butter. While he is hesitating whether he shall make the plunge, we will retrace our steps to Zurich.

Clearly a second communication from the Philharmonic reached Wagner but a day or two after despatch of his letter of Jan. 8 to Praeger, for whereas Anderson's mission to Zurich expired on the 17th (at latest, 18th), Herr Steiner reproduces an undated local note of Wagner's: "Dear Sulzer, as I am beginning to discover that you're a very generous friend, indeed, but a very strict trustee [cf. iv, 398], it is some consolation to be able to inform you that in a few days' time I expect the treasurer of the Philharmonic Society from London, who is coming to Zurich expressly to capture me in person. Put that in your pipe!" Praeger, then, can scarcely have received his first commission, certainly not executed it, before it was rendered nugatory by the directors' unaided resolve to send one of themselves to treat with Wagner—a trouble and expense they would have gladly avoided, "in the snow too," had they been aware of the existence of an intermediary.

Whether George Frederick Anderson, the said treasurer, stayed more than a day at Zurich, though likely, I cannot aver, as we do not know the day of his arrival. All that is to be gleaned anent the interview, is contained in two letters of Wagner's, to Liszt and Praeger, written as soon as it was over. Of these I give the place of honour to that to Liszt (already cited *re* the Faust-overture), which, albeit terminally dated "19. Jan. 55,"* has the appearance of at least commencing before that of Jan. 18 to Praeger:—

Dear Franz, only to-day can I tell you anything definite as to London. A Mr Anderson, treasurer of the Philharmonic (Master of the Queen's band) has come (*kam*) to Zurich expressly to arrange the matter with me. I was ill at ease about it, for it isn't my affair to go

* It is even possible that this should be read "17. Jan. 55," as handwritten "7"s and "9"s are so often mistaken for one another. That would explain the "only to-day" (*erst heute*); whereas the correctness of the date on the letter to Praeger, "after Anderson's departure," is proved by the Zurich postmark "18 Jan. 55." Must I add that the above translation is not entirely at one with Hueffer's?

to London and conduct Philharmonic concerts, even if—as they wish—I am to give some of my own compositions there (for I have composed nothing for the concert-room). However, I plainly felt it was a question of either definitely turning my back once for all on every chance and all attempt at intervention in our art-publicity—or—of grasping just this hand extended to me.

London is the only place in the world where it might be feasible for *me* to give my Lohengrin at last, since the kings and principalities of Germany have something else to do, than amnesty me. It might interest me to win the English so far to my side as to enable a select (*exquisite*) German Opera to be got up for next year, under Court protection, with my works under my own control. I admit that I could have no better introduction for it, than by making my début there as conductor of the Philharmonic (the old !) ; and so I ended by having nothing more against my sale, tho' I have fetched a very low figure (two-hundred pounds for four months *). So I shall arrive in London the beginning of March for eight concerts, the first of which takes place the 12th of March, the last the 25th of June. The beginning of *July* I shall be on the Seelisberg.—It would be quite glorious if you did visit me in London [as L. had half-promised] : in any case I must give something of yours there. Think it over.—Give a thought to Joachim, too, in any case : once I'm in London, I shall soon bring that about" [proceeds to *Faust* matter, see cap. I.].

Liszt answers on the 25th : "Dearest Richard, the London Philharmonic comes in pat, and I am very glad at it. Only half a year back and these people were wagging their heads ; ay, some even hissed the performance of the Tannhäuser-overture (conducted by Costa †)—Klindworth and Remeny were almost the only ones who had the courage to applaud aloud and beard the ingrained philistinism of the Philharmonic !—Well, it will be another tune now, and you will put new life into *old England* and the *old Philharmonic !* Good luck to you ! I recommend you

* "120 guineas, for eight concerts and eight rehearsals, was a low figure for one like Signor Costa, who has done so much to sustain the tottering fortunes of the Society. Mendelssohn, when he conducted six concerts and rehearsals (in 1844—the most prosperous season ever known), received 30 guineas for each. But Mendelssohn was a non-resident, who came from Leipsic expressly,"—says the *M. Wd* of Jan. 27. Operatic prime donne were appraised much higher, for we have seen Johanna Wagner contracting for £50 a performance in 1852, and offered double by a rival impresario (vol. iv, 459 and 466 *n*).

† Liszt is in error about Costa, as we have seen it was Lindpaintner and at the *New* Philh.

Klindworth as a Wagnerian *de la veille* . . and a capital pianist; he studied eighteen months with me at Weymar.—You will allow me, no doubt, to send Klindworth a couple of lines for you. So far as I know, there is no pianist in London to touch him—only, he has got rather into the bad books of the London philistines and journeymen through his too outspoken sympathies for the so-called 'music of the future.' . . . Hearty thanks for your kind offer to give something of mine at the Philharmonic—I think it more advisable, however, to leave that until next season (56). For the present you will have your hands full enough with yourself, and ought to play a fairly waiting game the first year. The main thing for you is to gain a firm footing in London—and first impress your understanding of Beethoven, Gluck etc., on orchestra alike and audience. Then these people should at the same time learn to listen to, and comprehend the Tannhäuser and Faust overtures as well, and finally rise to an appreciation of the prelude to Lohengrin."—Liszt, who is in excellent vein in this letter, goes on to approve the notion of a London Wagner-operatic season for next year, but warns his friend against "theatrical sharks, who will be sure to attempt to exploit you, and might be perilous both to your purse and position." On the other hand, though he has cited Klindworth as a London supporter to be cultivated, he evidently has never heard of Praeger—first mentioned to him in fact, and as a mere address, in Wagner's letter of mid-February (no. 176, Eng. 2nd ed.).

Meantime Praeger himself has written Wagner, and been answered Jan. 18. The contents of P.'s letter, his actual *first* to Wagner, are only to be divined by a complex process of induction; in his book he does not even trouble to allude to it, but in his *N. Zeitschrift* report of November 1855 already adduced, after his sentence on the despatch to Zurich of "Mr Anderson, who is the soul of the Old Philharmonic," he continues: "Wagner wrote to me (we had never seen one another, but had become acquainted through a mutual dear friend). He had asked for extra rehearsals, moreover a second conductor for the vocal and solo pieces. This they had refused him,* and so I explained to him the

* Less than a twelvemonth after the offer, then, Praeger mixes everything up; for Wagner's first letter to him (of Jan. 8) was written before he had had any answer at all from the Philharmonic.

impossibility of such an innovation, from local circumstances, and at the same time made him acquainted with the opposition he would find here, the scurrilous attacks he might expect on the part of the *Times* and *Athenæum*," etc., etc.—We need have no hesitation in asserting that Praeger did nothing of the kind: unless he wanted to *dissuade* Wagner from accepting, nobody in his senses would discourage him in advance; but Wagner's letter of Jan. 18 disposes of the suggestion at once, since it nowhere touches on that sort of topic. What Praeger *must* have written, to judge by Wagner's answer, would be pretty much as follows: After receipt of your favour of the 8th inst., I tried to make inquiries for you through Mr Hogarth, but ascertained that Mr Anderson had already started for Zurich to make every arrangement with you in person; for my own part, I should strongly advise you to accept the offer, under whatever conditions; as to Herr Roeckel's suggestion that you should honour me by putting up at my house for a while, I am afraid you would find our fare too simple, but I shall be delighted to do whatever lies in my power for you in other directions.—That, though a little shy about the housing of this perilous visitor (see below), would be a letter such as Wagner could reasonably answer with "Hearty thanks, dear Herr Praeger! In your letter you shew yourself to me exactly as I was bound to expect; which gives me great courage for London"—whilst Praeger's "official interview with the directors," so far from having taken place as yet, is advanced in a later portion of this letter of Wagner's as something which "naturally" *will have* to precede any answer to his fresh enquiries.

The first tiny paragraph in Wagner's letter of Jan. 18 (just quoted) is rendered fairly accurately in Praeger's book, saving that the "*lieber Herr Praeger*" becomes the more familiar "dear Praeger"; but the second shews the selfsame process of amendment *ad majorem gloriam*, tho' in a less degree, as had made such egregious nonsense—to call it by no sterner name—of the first half of the letter of Jan. 8 itself. The Wagner-autograph says: "No doubt you already know that I have given my consent to the Anderson man (*dem Anderson*): at least, he told me that he must report at once per telegraph, so that the necessary advertisements (*Ankündigungen*) might be issued forthwith. For that matter, I only received your letter after Anderson's departure

from here: consequently it gratified me to derive from it an endorsement (*Bestätigung*) of my consent." Here everything is perfectly plain: before Wagner's letter can reach him, Praeger will be sure to have seen the public announcements, and thus have learnt that, albeit his advice did come too late, it was in harmony with his correspondent's decision. But that clearly did not give F. Praeger importance enough in the eyes of the writer of his book; he (or a 'ghost' of his?) converts the passage into the following incoherence: "You no doubt know that I have given my word to Mr Anderson. He was anxious to telegraph it at once to London in order to have the advertisement printed. I received your letter after Mr Anderson had left. I was glad to find from you that you had been informed officially of my having accepted the engagement." The little variations reducing Wagner's first sentence and a half to three spasmodic jerks need not detain us, but no mere carelessness of translation could pervert "*eine Bestätigung meiner Zusage*"—i.e. a counsel sent by Praeger to Wagner before the latter's acceptance, though received by him just after it—into an "official" intimation made by the Philharmonic to Praeger. As no sublunary telegram could reach London two to three days *before* despatch, the dates given above preclude any such twisting of Wagner's meaning, even if the "You no doubt know" were not in flagrant opposition to the "I was glad to find from you" etc.: the "informed officially" is nothing but another bolstering of the Philharmyth.

In further course of this letter of Jan. 18 it is noticeable that, whereas Wagner informs Liszt of the exact sum for which he has sold himself, Praeger is simply told: "They might have been a little more liberal (*spendabler*); if it is these gentlemen's conscious aim to secure a 'celebrity,' they ought to have determined to spend somewhat more on it. On the honorarium point I answered Anderson rather coldly." Within a fortnight or so of receipt, Praeger allowed this passage to betray him into the absurdity of reporting to the New York *Musical Gazette* (p. 75 *sup.*): "In regard to pecuniary considerations, Wagner rather astonished the entire John Bull; he coolly told Mr Anderson that he was too much occupied to give that point much thought,* and only

* The origin of *this* may be traced to a later passage in the same letter: "As regards my London board and lodging, Anderson mumbled something about their providing me with it free:—I was preoccupied and did not pay

desired to know at what time he (Wagner) would be wanted in London"; which he intensifies thus for the *Neue Zeitschrift* next November, "It is characteristic that Wagner answered Mr Anderson, when the latter spoke about a fee, 'I leave that to you; you can tell it me when I reach London.'" When one deals in "characteristics," one should be a little more careful to make sure that one is instancing a case in point; for this seeming trifle knocks the last nail into the coffin of the Philharmyth—an infant funeral.

Let us get back to undistorted history. "What I think of this engagement"—Wagner follows up the "Zusage" paragraph—"I cannot make so plain to you in brief. In any event I am conscious of bringing a sacrifice; only I felt that it was a question of either turning my back on all artistic publicity, and all relations thereto, once for all, or else—if any *hope* still dwells in me—of grasping just *this* hand now proffered me.* To be sure, I have repeatedly experienced that I am always the most thoroughly at fault if once I hope; yet I felt tempted to make one more attempt, and merely as such do I regard it." To us, who now know all the influences under which it was written, this aside conveys a deeper meaning than it can have possibly had to the gentleman who first perused it; but we must hurry on to other outward facts.

After that passage anent the "celebrity" etc., we next arrive at a fresh appeal to Praeger's local knowledge. He is asked if it would be feasible for Wagner to make his first appearance at a concert, to be twice repeated, consisting entirely of his own compositions (as at Zurich 1853) and undertaken "entirely on my own account?—In that case I should be chary toward the Philharmonic with my compositions.† — I presume, however,

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much attention to that. Did I really hear aright?—He spoke—I believe—of a nice abode by Regent's Park which they could procure for me. Would you have the kindness, perhaps, to interrogate Anderson about this, in my name, when occasion offers?"—It must be remembered that Wagner and A. had no interpreter to help them.

* Praeger can translate correctly when he tries, and he has rendered this last clause—common to the synchronous letters to himself and to Liszt—much more rationally than Dr Hueffer has. Of the next sentence, however, he makes a clumsy, tho' harmless expansion.

† "Für diesen Fall würde ich gegen die Philharmonic mit meinen Compositionen zurückhalten." As "zurückhalten *mit*" is an intransitive use of

that performances of one's own would present insuperable difficulties, and consequently I shall be compelled to give *loose change* (Einzelnes) at the concerts of the Philharmonic, whereby my [artistic] intentions will certainly be more seriously affected." Praeger's advice is asked on this rather adventurous question, "if you think it worth the pains of answering"; but in any case he is begged to say whether it will be necessary to get the band-parts copied out at Zurich in advance, or to send the scores, perhaps, to London for that purpose: "This you of course can only answer me after an official interview with the directors of the Philharmonic" (note the "an," not *another*, "official interview"). That query will lead to results, but let us finish the letter first.—It concludes with enquiries relative to a suggestion of free board and lodging which Wagner imagines Anderson to have "mumbled" to him (see note, p. 84): "If they could offer me such a pleasant, quiet, snug apartment (with a good piano) from the 1st of March, it would just suit me, and I should not come upon your hands at all; which also would relieve you of all embarrassment on the score of my supposed daintiness." The original German of this last little remark—*und ich fiele Ihnen nicht erst zur Last, befreite Sie auch somit von aller Beklommenheit wegen meiner vermeintlichen Gourmandise*—plainly shews that Praeger's letter had raised a polite but palpable demur to Papa Roeckel's vicarious tender of P.'s hospitality, as I already conjectured. We can find no fault with Praeger for not jumping at the chance of entertaining a stranger whose bodily presence might doubly compromise him in the eyes of confrères, but it is quite another matter to find him transferring the *Beklommenheit* to Wagner's account, and rendering the passage thus: "for I would then save you trouble, and it would free me from all anxiety on that score, especially about my supposed daintiness." That is rather a disingenuous putting of the boot on the wrong leg, especially as Praeger makes Wagner continue, "Now I presume I shall soon have something more to say about this," whereas he had really written the direct contrary, "hear something more" (*Nun, hierüber höre ich wohl schon noch*).—Finally,

the verb, it is incorrect to render it, as Praeger does, "In which case I would keep back my compositions from the Philharmonic." Wagner's manifest idea is to give a general impression of his music elsewhere, before allowing it to be strewn through the Philharmonic junket.

the letter winds up with: "Meanwhile I pity you sincerely, in advance, for my acquaintanceship: Heaven grant I may be able to offer you something good and noble in return for all the trouble I shall cause you!—Yours R. W."

Now let us see how Praeger executes his commission aforesaid. At last he appears to have really had that boasted interview with some or all of the Philharmonic directors, for he tells us in a passage controllable by Wagner's answer: "On reading this letter, admiration for the fearless courage of Wagner grows upon one. A whole concert devoted to his own works!* He little knew with whom he was dealing [quite so]. Wagner's temper was quick [as P. must have discovered *afterwards*], and I feared to irritate him by conveying the certain refusal of the directors, but it had to be done. It was a difficult and delicate matter to prevent friction between Richard Wagner, possessed with the exalted notion of his mission, on the one hand, and the steady-going time-serving directors on the other. I saw Mr Anderson. Timorous of the leap in the dark he and his colleagues had made in engaging Wagner, they feared hazarding the reputation of their concerts by the devotion of a whole evening to Wagner's works, but a compromise—that some selections should be given—was readily effected. The conveyance of this news to Wagner brought from him the following letter:—'My best thanks to you for so amiably taking such trouble. That you sounded the directors of the Philharmonic as to the question whether they would fill up a whole evening with selections from those of my operas which I have arranged specially for concert performances, although fully authorized to do so, produced a somewhat disagreeable effect upon me. Heavens knows how strange it is to me that I should force myself upon anybody, and originally, I only wished your

* Wagner had asked *them* for nothing of the kind, but Praeger has made it appear so in his English rendering by interpolation of an "or"—"Do you think this is practicable, or do you think I, myself, could undertake it as an enterprise?" The autograph had said: "Do you think this is possible? Do you think I could undertake such performances entirely off my own bat? (*Glauben Sie nun dass diess möglich ist? Glauben Sie, dass ich solche Aufführungen ganz auf meine Hand unternehmen kann?*)." I believe this to have been a case of sheer obtusity on Praeger's part, and that, having once got his own "or" into his head, he could never get it out again, even thirty years later. I will not go into his retro-translation here, but may assure the reader the "or" is religiously represented there, in spite of further variants.

opinion whether I had any chance to have one concert set apart for my works, for in such case I should have held back the various selections. I had a similar intimation from Hogarth, to whom I briefly answered,' " etc.—Of course this is the true origin of the "shake hands all round" adornment of the Philharmyth, but it was a very stupid blunder that Praeger had committed, and one need not wonder if his new friends, who now are sauced as "time-serving directors," were seriously alarmed at having such a proposition suddenly sprung upon them just after Anderson's return. Unfortunately, too, in his old age he has twisted Wagner's letter of reply (Feb. 1) in such a way as to conceal his gaucherie of thirty years ago, for here is what Wagner *really* said in answer to him :—

Most respected Friend,

Best thanks for your friendly endeavours. Though you were quite within your rights, however, it has turned out a little unpleasant for me that you communicated to the directors of the Philh. my whole enquiry about an integral performance of my opera-pieces as arranged for concert use—which strictly was nothing but a private wish of mine. Heaven knows how foreign it is to me, to obtrude myself on anyone whatever : all I really wanted, was [your] advice as to whether I had any chance of presenting the whole on one evening ; in which case I should have been quite chary with my single pieces for the concerts of the Philh.*—Now Hogarth, too, has written me

* "Dass Sie den Directoren der Philh. meine Anfrage wegen—der mir eigentlich einzig erwünschten—Gesammtaufführung meiner zum Conzertgebrauch arrangirten Opernstücke, vollständig mittheilten, ist mir, wenn gleich Sie vollkommen berechtigt waren, nachträglich doch etwas unangenehm. Weiss Gott, wie fremd es mir ist, mich irgend Jemand aufzudrängen : ich wollte eigentlich bloss Rath darüber haben, ob ich Aussicht hätte, Alles an einem Abende aufzuführen, für welchen Fall ich dann mit meinen einzelnen Stücken für die Concerte der Philh. ganz zurückgehalten hätte."—The first of these two sentences, I admit, is by no means easy to render faithfully into fluent English ; but by introducing "whether they [the directors] would fill up a whole evening," and omitting any equivalent of the awkward "—der mir eigentlich einzig erwünschten—" Praeger has brought it into a form which only needed in the second his substitution of "to have one concert set apart" and omission of the final reference to "the concerts of the Philh.," to make his own contention plausible. These complicated processes are carried still farther in his German paraphrase, where Wagner is positively made to *thank* him for having "sounded the directors of the Philharmonic as to a whole concert for my works ; though I had begged you to do so, the answer was very unpleasant to me." What next?

at some length, at the same time as yourself, and just as you foreshadowed.*

I answered him briefly at once, that it was quite agreeable to me to present none but the classical works; should they later wish for something of my own as well, they would only have to say so and I would try to pick out something suitable; for which contingency I myself would bring orchestral parts with me, only a few whereof would need reduplication, which would entail no great expense in London either.—And I really am content with that: these people will get acquainted with me. After all, I have strictly nothing definite in mind with the whole London expedition but just an attempt to learn for once what can be done with your famous orchestra; London can never become an actual soil for me. Moreover, the little change will do me good.—

So, if you will open your hospitable doors to me, I shall knock at your house in the first place:† if you will put me up till we have found a nice apartment for me, I shall thank you for it heartily and do my best to beg the pardon of your honoured wife for my effrontery.

Within the first days of March I shall be in London; of which, to be quite candid, I make no kind of real account, as—at bottom—of nothing in this world!—

But I shall be very glad to be able to make friends with you.‡—English I do not speak: I am totally without talent for modern languages, and the learning of them disgusts me now, if only because of the great exercise of memory. I shall have to get along with French.

So, to speedy personal acquaintance!

Zurich — Yours very faithfully
1 Febr. 1855 — RICHARD WAGNER.

We politely will echo the wish last expressed, § but accompany

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* Here we undoubtedly have the slender basis of that "he might expect at any moment to receive a communication from the society" which Praeger, with his usual topsy-turviness, has transposed to the commencement of the whole transaction (cf. p. 62 *sup.*).

† "Wenn Sie mir also Ihre gastliche Thüre öffnen wollen, klopfe ich zuerst bei Ihnen an"; which P. changes into "As you open your hospitable doors to me, I shall avail myself of your kindness."

‡ "Sie zum Freund gewinnen zu können"—as usual, P. improves it, "to gain your closer friendship."

§ Under the date of "Zurich, 12th February"—which would be about the same interval as had elapsed between the previous letters—Praeger gives an extract from "the next letter from Wagner"; but it is quite impossible that, after an intimation "as I isolate myself at home the whole morning" etc., Wagner should have observed to this personal stranger "You will remember, too, when I did something similar to this at Dresden." The autograph of

Wagner to other events that have still to precede the packing of his travelling-trunks.

In curious contrast to the diffidence of London, almost every post in the first few weeks of 1855 must have brought our hero news of triumphs in that fatherland from which he still was outlawed. The same issue of the *Neue Zeitschrift* which contained the Rheingold-indiscretion (see cap. I.) placed it on record that "The success of 'Tannhäuser' at Prague can only be described as altogether brilliant. The 17th December brought the sixth performance [première Nov. 25] with abonnement suspended and a house packed full; a case unprecedented, we are told, in Prague's stage-annals. After this thorough victory over the Austrian musical reactionaries, people are already thinking of taking 'Lohengrin' in hand for next season." A couple of pages farther: "We recently remarked that Prague was the first city in Austria to produce 'Tannhäuser.' We were in error, for Gratz put on this opera as early as last winter, with great success." Then on Jan. 5 the *N. Z.* speaks of the Tannhäuser-overture having been performed at Carlsruhe by Kapellmeister Strauss; * on the 12th, of the second finale from *Tannhäuser* being given at a Gratz charity-concert "in evening-dress! The audience, which had often heard the opera itself here with great gusto, naturally was indignant at seeing this beautiful finale disfigured in this way"; and on another page, of *Lohengrin* having been produced Jan. 4 at Cologne. In the issue of Jan. 19, besides a brief intimation of the Philharmonic offer, we hear of the "March and chorus" from *Tannhäuser* being rendered at a minor manufacturing town such as Iserlohn; whilst that of the 26th—the same which mentions Anderson's journey to Zurich and definite engagement of Wagner—records the production of *Lohengrin* at Hamburg on the 19th, of *Tannhäuser* at Gotha (Liszt present) on the 14th and at Hanover the 21st, and also prints the following from Cologne (dated Jan. 20): "R. Wagner's 'Lohengrin,' which has had an extremely brilliant reception here, seems to be

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this fragmentary "letter" is *not* forthcoming; wherefore, tho' in its wholly unimportant substance it *may* have once existed, in its printed form it can only be ranged among the manifest apocrypha.

* The opera itself was produced there (E. Devrient director) Jan. 28: "all the principal performers and Kapellmeister Strauss were called"—says the *N. Z.* of March 9, 55.

developing into a box-office piece [*Cassenstück*—vulg. 'safe draw']. Tomorrow brings the fifth performance within twelve days; a result we have had with no other opera for years . . . Director Röder, a great personal admirer of Wagner, has devoted an amazing diligence to the rehearsing . . . The odious criticisms of a local music-journal [Prof. Bischoff's], which has been working against Wagner in the most malicious manner for a year past, are struck dumb by the splendid success of the opera and its enthusiastic reception by the highly-cultured public of this place. That shews what the voice of the public can do." In all probability this last report would come from friend Lesimple (vol. iv, 373)—another correspondent for Wagner to write to, just as in December he had thanked his old friend Marie Lehmann (i, 129) twice,* and Anton Apt at least once, for accounts of *Tannhäuser's* success at Prague.

The Prague success was rather an important episode, largely owing to the talents of Louise Mayer, the "Elisabeth," whom we shall meet hereafter as "Isolde" of the abortive *Tristan* study in Vienna; a few lines from a later issue of the *N. Z.* (Feb. 2, 55) must therefore be pressed into our service. "The success is unparalleled in the annals of our theatre"—says the writer of a detailed report from Prague—"Even the most sanguine expectations of the friends of Wagner have been magnificently surpassed; for surely nobody allowed himself to dream that this opera, whose tenth performance in the brief period since its first production here has just been given for Frl. L. Mayer's benefit, would always fill the house to crowding. And that the cause is something more than idle curiosity, is proved by the fact that most of the audience have listened to it a fourth and fifth time, and follow it each time with greater interest. . . . As soon as Tannhäuser appears on the bills, every ticket is disposed of."

The same issue of the *Neue Zeitschrift* reports on the "unexampled success" of the *Tannhäuser* production at Hanover (Jan. 21); a city in which that opera ought to have been given nine years earlier, had Marschner but been duly grateful for

* Dec. 31, 54, to Frau Lehmann (then harpist at the Prague theatre): "It gives me a most agreeable feeling, to see you so warmly espousing my cause. For the matter of that, I look much more towards the ladies than the men—who generally have learnt up so much rubbish, that they never arrive at proper feeling for a work of art"—a familiar maxim of his.

Wagner's efforts in *his* cause at Dresden (a story I reserve for the Appendix). Another king was on the Hanoverian throne now, another conductor in office, and of no less importance, a tenor who afterwards became world-famed in Wagner's rôles: that tenor we shall also meet again in this same opera, at the time of its Paris fiasco. "The overture was demanded *da capo*"—says the *N. Z.* of the Hanover première—"number after number tumultuously applauded. Among the performers Hr. Niemann as Tannhäuser distinguished himself in particular. Profoundly moved himself, and therefore moving others also, never has this young man played and sung so naturally, nor with such truth to the smallest detail. A triple call rewarded him," etc. A fortnight later (Feb. 16), after recording the growing enthusiasm at Darmstadt (friend Schindelmeisser), the *N. Z.* reverts to Hanover: "Richard Wagner's 'Tannhäuser' maintains itself on the repertory with increasing good fortune. It has already been given thrice to overflowing houses, with suspended abonnement and prices raised; at the second performance, the Kapellmeister Hr. [C. L.] Fischer and the exponents of the principal rôles had the unusual honour of being commanded to the Royal box, where his Majesty was pleased to express to them his gracious thanks for the admirable performance of the opera. At the King's own wish, Tannhäuser will be repeated for a fourth time on the 14th inst., as the Duke of Altenburg is coming hither expressly to attend the performance." Again a little later (March 9 and 16) the *N. Z.* has quite a long report from Hanover on *Tannhäuser*: "The undivided interest of the public is directed to this opera; one hears Tannhäuser talked of wherever one goes. Down to the present it has been given four times with extraordinary approval, which regularly vents itself directly after the overture, and to all appearance it will become a *Cassenstück*. People here have been completely taken by surprise. Hitherto they had nursed great prejudice against Wagner's operas, of which they were positively as afraid as of ghosts; they denounced all admirers as belonging to a party which, for some occult reason, was 'working for Wagner.' Those cries are silenced now . . . In brief, Wagner here has won another victory, a victory which many an opera-composing Court Kapellmeister well might envy him. Not a member of the audience can escape the powerful impression made by the opera's chief situations; one can observe that plainly enough . . . To

42.5

be sure, there have not lacked derogatory judgments, as at many other places; nevertheless the more influential portion of our press speaks in appreciative terms about the opera, and pays it much attention. . . . The mounting is brilliant, and quite in keeping with the spirit of the work. Similarly Hr. Kapellmeister Fischer, who rehearsed the opera and conducts its performances, has furnished another proof of his valuable services therewith. Wagner would have great joy of our orchestra, if he could attend a performance . . . Hr. Niemann seems as if created for this part, and if not already one of the best, or quite the best Tannhäuser in Germany, he will become so yet. He keeps in full vigour of voice to the end; his acting, too, is intelligent and truthful, only his movements at times are deficient in grace. . . . In recognition of his merits with regard to the highly successful production of 'Tannhäuser,' Kapellmeister Fischer has been presented by his Majesty the King with a costly diamond breast-pin. At this ceremony the Royal pair declared that Tannhäuser was their favourite among all modern operas, and the court would miss none of its representations."

Rather a long extract, but doubly interesting to us as the court of Hanover was then so closely allied to our own through the pathetic figure of its English-bred blind King (Prince George of Cumberland), whilst the reception of *Tannhäuser* in Hanover itself bears such striking contrast to that of its overture in Hanover Square, save only for the compliment paid the work by the two related sovereigns, themselves exceptions to the reigning rule.

From royalty we move on to that typical 'free city' Hamburg, and find that "Wagner's 'Lohengrin' so enthusiasmed the crowded house at its first representation in the Hamburg Town-theatre [Jan. 19] that all the principal performers together with Stage-manager Rottmayer were called" (*N. Z.* Feb. 9). Then Jan. 28 we have Wagner himself writing Breitkopf and Haertel to ask "if the success of 'Lohengrin' at other places is not opening their eyes to the character of the Leipzig" fiasco of a year ago (cf. vol. iv). To August Roeckel also he writes Feb. 5, among other things: "My operas continue to make their way in Germany, if somewhat slowly. Tannhäuser has been given almost everywhere except Berlin, Brunswick, Vienna, Munich, Stuttgart, and the minor theatres of Bavaria and Austria (barring Prague and Grätz).

Lohengrin is following step by step, and holds up well on the Rhine and at Breslau [vol. iv]; even the Holländer is being tackled here and there. As to the performances, I'm convinced they are mainly *bad* and would distress me for the most part if I saw them. Lohengrin in particular (without my ever having been able to present it myself) is a great worry to me. Regarding the *Paris* production of this opera, some one has gammoned you: myself I do not know a word about it, and should probably refuse to hear one if such a thing were really possible.—Something different has happened, tho': the Old Philharmonic society in London has invited me to conduct its concerts this season. When I received the invitation, it was as if I had tumbled out of the clouds [not a syllable about Praeger or his boasted foreshadowing etc.]: I had never bothered my head with London in the least before, but looked quietly on when they maltreated and hissed my Tannhäuser-overture there—at the selfsame concerts [Liszt's mistake]—a year ago. Then as I was hesitating to accept they sent one of the directors of the society over to Zurich on purpose to nab me. Finally I consented because I felt it was a matter of either renouncing any contact with our art-publicity for good and all, or accepting just this hand extended to me [declared for the third time]. They are not paying me much, and as I have no speculation in view with it, I'm strictly going as nothing but a tourist, just to see what sort of things the people do there. If I had any ulterior notion at all, it would be of getting a picked German company together in London some day, to give my operas, and in particular my *Lohengrin* at last.—That remains to be seen."

Meantime—besides the instrumenting of *Die Walküre*, "which I shall finish in London: at present I have only begun it"—he has just conducted Beethoven's Septet at a concert of the Zurich 'Panharmonic' the 30th Jan., and the day after his letter to August he conducts the *Freischütz* overture and Beethoven's symphony in A; so that he is getting into training for London. But the great event of this season at Zurich is the production of *Tannhäuser*, a rumour whereof we heard in cap. I., and about which Wagner writes to Frau Ritter, "I have even let them get round me to plague myself with a representation of *Tannhäuser* on the ridiculous stage here." For weeks had he been preparing it, to oblige the enterprising lessee of the theatre, Ernst Walther,

and Herr Steiner tells us that the tenor Ressler, "a poor creature accustomed to wrap his audience in an atmosphere of ennui," had been so fed up from time to time by Minna Wagner, and so coached up by her husband, "that he was no longer to be recognised." Feb. 15 Wagner sends Herwegh a tiny note: "I invite you and your wife, for to-morrow's Tannhäuser, to the big middle-box, where a few tickets have been placed at my disposal. Should you happen to have taken tickets already, please get rid of them. I shall see you tomorrow afternoon at your house.—Your R. Wagner."

The day of first performance, Feb. 16, our old friend the *Eidgenössische* blossoms out with

Richard Wagner's Tannhäuser is to appear at last to-day in flesh and blood upon our boards [so Minna's fattening process had succeeded] . . . The rehearsals have proceeded under the composer's own guidance, and those who have ever attended a rehearsal of Wagner's, know what that implies. The whole company is filled with enthusiasm for the work, and has spared no sacrifice to ensure it a worthy production. Herr Wagner has repeatedly expressed his satisfaction with the exploits of the singers; we do not quite give up the hope that he will not merely inspire the representation of one of his finest works, but also enhance it by his personal direction. In any circumstances, however, the art-lovers of Zurich know the debt they owe the master.

Wagner neither conducted on this occasion, nor at its first repetition (Feb. 19), but left the baton in the hand of his apprentice, the ordinary conductor at the Zurich theatre, one Müller (initials unknown). His "Elisabeth" was a Frl. Jungwirth, his "Venus" Frau Hoffmann (as 'guest'), his "Wolfram" Hr Haag, and his "Landgrave" Hr Cesar; the orchestra was reinforced by numerous local amateurs. The prices of admission, "raised," ranged from 1 franc to 10; that of the textbook was fixed at 75 ct.; whilst the opera was announced to commence at 6.30 and conclude at 10 (see playbill reproduced by Steiner). The following is from the *Eidgenössische's* reports on the first two performances:—

Sunday, Feb. 18, 1855.—Richard Wagner's 'Tannhäuser' has been received with enthusiasm even at its first performance. Its unusual character gave rise at first to hushed surprise, but in the second and third acts that turned into an outburst of rejoicing. The composer

was tumultuously called twice over, and appeared among his valorous performers. For a first representation it was altogether excellent. The scenery left a little to be desired, but otherwise the mounting was tasteful, the orchestra well and fully manned, and every singer prompted by a real affection for his task. . . .

It is impossible to grasp the whole depth and beauty of this work, in all its details, after a single performance; but everyone certainly felt that it far transcends the pleasure of a fleeting hour, and stands unique in modern Opera. Here we have an integral art-work before us, based on one poetic root-idea, and felt out by a poet who has sought and surely also found for it throughout the truest and most beautiful expression. For all its romanticism, there are no unmotived effects here, no claptrap situations, no flourishes and no tirades; the passions depicted are human and true, their expression is simple and noble, text, music and scene in fullest harmony, the whole thing moulded in one mould with constant artistic intent. It delights us, alike for the master's and the public's sake, that this noble and earnest intention should have come to evidence in Zurich too.

Wednesday, *Feb.* 21.—Richard Wagner's 'Tannhäuser' has stood its ground a second time; nay, it pleases better, the more one hears it—the best of proofs that it is nothing ordinary. The composer and performers were repeatedly called. On this occasion, to particularise, Fräulein Jungwirth and Herr Haag brought the noble figures of Elisabeth and Wolfram into higher relief. Each time the opera's second act, representing the Contest of Minstrels, has made the greatest effect; certainly it is the crown of the whole. The first act is for the most part lyric [!] and the daring picture of the Hörselberg has numerous difficulties to contend with, both inner and outer. The third act is predominantly elegiac of nature. The opera's dramatic interest, on the other hand, is almost wholly concentrated in its second act . . . a work of art which may always be sure of the most transporting effect.

It will be of interest, perhaps, to hear that 'Tannhäuser' has just been given at the Royal court-theatre in Hanover with extraordinary success. But the fairest enjoyment is reserved for ourselves, since the master has allowed himself to be persuaded to take the magic wand into his own hand after all.

To my mind there is always something bracing about these whole-hearted *Eidgenössische* reports, and it is quite sad to compare them with the supercilious disdain, or worse, of those others I have dealt with in the earlier part of this chapter. Here, so far as it went, Wagner seems to have found that "free people," free of hide-bound prejudice, for which he had longed

as receptive partners in his life-work. But there is no time to moralise: a farewell Panharmonic concert has still to be recorded, ere that third Zurich performance of *Tannhäuser*. This concert of Feb. 20 was conducted entirely by our hero himself, and followed by a popular ovation. Let the *Eidgenössische* tell us all about it:—

Thursday, Feb. 22.—On Tuesday Richard Wagner conducted the last concert before his departure for London. He delighted us once more with glorious parting gifts: besides Gluck's overture to Iphigenia in Aulis, his own gigantic Faust-overture, the lovely Bridal music from 'Lohengrin,' the glowing yet devotional overture to 'Tannhäuser,' and the indescribably celestial prelude to 'Lohengrin.' Our chief consolation, however, is that the master will not quite forsake us! For, when two young ladies [afterwards Frau E. Bleuler-Hubler and Frau Ott-Daeniker] presented him with a merited wreath amid the acclamations of the entire crowded hall, he gave us the assurance that he would return to Zurich from the great world-city; he had found so kind a haven here, he said, and his sole remaining wish was that we might help him, too, to ground a lasting haven here for art [a Nibelungen theatre?].

We may imagine some private farewell-gatherings also, rather melancholy meetings at the best, with haply a furtive tear; but these are not on record. So we pass to the last public event—the master's actual farewell appearance in public at Zurich, albeit he did return there after London. The playbill for Feb. 23 announces that evening's performance of *Tannhäuser* as also "for the last time," though its success must have emboldened the director to give it again, as this opera was performed twice more, in March, after its composer's departure. For the last time we will call upon the *Eidgenössische*:—

Sunday, Feb. 25, 1855.—The third performance of 'Tannhäuser,' under Richard Wagner's own lead, was a festival alike for the leave-taking master and his new [!] creation. The house was crammed full, and loaded both with wreaths and tokens of enthusiasm. The representation was consummate.

Admitting that 'Tannhäuser' may elsewhere be equipped with richer means and still more admirably cast in certain rôles, it would hardly be possible anywhere to meet with a representation so harmonious and complete in its total effect, as this which has arisen here beneath the hands of the composer. . . . Here also [after curtain-fall] Wagner spoke of his return to us, and how he was ready for any

sacrifices in the cause of true art if he could be sure of always finding for it the same support and sympathy.

But the verdict has now been given on the new artistic path which Wagner has struck out. That it is a true and noble one, is proclaimed aloud by the delight its witnessing has roused, the admiration that has involuntarily carried even the indifferent, and former adversaries, off their feet. The "Artwork of the Future" has brilliantly triumphed over the ephemeral products of an effeminated sentiment and a vitiated taste. Yet it will remain an artwork of the future still; for, like all the best and fairest that the human mind has fashioned, it will never pass away; a noble prototype, its example will cause fresh and ever richer art-creations to blossom in its wake. . . . And Zurich, upon its side, will feel a growing sense of pride if it may call a minstrel such as this its own.

To complete the story, we have the full conversion of a newspaper which on the occasion of the triple Wagner-concert, not quite two years since, still halted twixt two judgments. Feb. 24 the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* came over to the conqueror with colours flying:—

The announcement "Wagner will conduct his 'Tannhäuser' himself" filled the theatre yesterday to its very last bench. The performance went splendidly in all its parts, and everywhere one heard and saw that Wagner's spirit had prevailed in one more strenuous test. Besides repeated distinctions in course of the piece, the composer was called at its close, when flowers and wreaths were thrown to him (Theatre-director Walther already had attentively festooned his desk with such). As at the last concert, Wagner spoke a few words of farewell, in which he also promised to return: if the public had but obtained a dim idea as yet of his endeavour, he was prepared to do his own full share if Zurich would do its. Honour to the Master! But thanks also to Herr Walther, and *all* who took part in this work, for the high enjoyment Zurich has received through its production!

It will be many a year ere Wagner's public exertions are greeted again with such fervour; in London he soon will learn to miss his honest Switzers. Yet it was no craving for fame, that sped him forth: the need of earning a little material independence had something to do with his acceptance of the London offer, no doubt; but there was another motive, a profounder cause. In that letter of Feb. 5 to August Roeckel he spoke of "*great inner sufferings whereof no one knows aught*," and of the "power of re-

nunciation won at a very decisive crisis in my inner life." Can we not see in this protracted abstention from Zurich a deliberate flight from a presence already beginning to haunt all his thoughts? Is there nothing told us by the date on that score of the Faust-overture presented to Mathilde Wesendonck "17 Jan. 1855, in remembrance of his dear friend"?—That was the day on which he gave Anderson his definite consent.

III.

NEBELHEIM.

French passport: viâ Paris.—Ferdinand Praeger: parentage and youth, compositions etc.; cannot convert Davison.—Wagner reaches Milton Street; intercourse with Praeger. Duty-calls; why not on Davison?—Lodgings, the Erard etc.; P.'s dog and dinners. Sight-seeing and shopping; sœur Léonie.—Sainton and Lüders; Carl Klindworth.—Views on the English.

> *What artist would not rather be snarled at by a giant, than caressed by a simpleton?*
>
> MUSICAL WORLD (Dec. '54).

MONDAY morning, February 26, 1855, Wagner starts on his lonely journey to London, viâ Paris. Even to obtain a permit to pass through France has been no simple matter, for the exile has had to undergo the same irritating formalities as on the occasion of his brief trip in the autumn of 53. "After repeated enquiries in Paris,"—he writes Liszt Feb. 7—"the French envoy [Berne?] is going to viser my passport at last, but with all kinds of repulsive chicanery, which must be made a clean sweep of in future, that I may be free to go through or into France at any time without ado. So I mean to make a call on the Minister of the Interior in Paris this time, and see if I cannot succeed in getting the caution against me stopped. Certainly it would be best of all if someone at the Weimar court—Lord knows who, if not the Grand Duke himself, perhaps through his envoy in Paris—were to give me an introduction such as should distinguish me a little in these people's eyes, and put in a sensible word for me: I would gladly make all needful promises in return.—Do see what you can manage there!!!—I'm starting from here in a fortnight; so—a little despatch!" The Grand Duke being confined to bed, Liszt replies that nothing can be done just yet; in fact it is not until a week after Wagner's arrival in London that he hears from

Liszt, "I have not been idle in your pass affair, but have had you most particularly recommended through the Grand Duke (and another person of weight). Let us hope these steps will not prove unavailing." Whether any vexatious restrictions were removed in consequence, does not appear; but four years later the same old obstacle crops up, before the master can transfer his home to Paris.

Such were the incidental pains and penalties of political outlawry; each step beyond the bounds of Switzerland had to be bought by an infinite expenditure of time and worry. There is more than an everyday groan, then, in that expression to old Fischer of March 2 from Paris itself: "It looks as if I should never return to Germany; you are all so mum about it, too, that I suppose I must think there's no chance of it.* As our generous ministers will; I'm getting used to it! But if you want to see me once again before our end, you'll have to take a journey into Switzerland yourself, where I shall be back the beginning of July." —This is the letter to which I have already referred (cap. I.) in connection with the *Rheingold* score, about which Wagner now expresses "great anxiety." I shall have to return to the subject when the fate of "this solitary example" has cleared a little; here I need only remind the reader that Fischer had shewn himself rather hurt at being left so long without a sight of it (iv, 391), as that will explain the kindly humour of this letter's opening: "But dear old Friend, how heavy you make my heart with your curious touchiness! At Zurich I could find no time to write you, but on my very first day of rest in Paris I'm sitting down to comb your head; as you deserve a little this time, notwithstanding you might be excused through your hasty youth."

It is quite a day of correspondence; besides letters which we may take as sent to Zurich, two more of this date have been preserved, the one to Dresden Tichatschek, the other to London Praeger. Tichatschek is congratulated on the "enormous endurance of his vocal powers" and on his prospect of singing in *Lohengrin*, which Wagner is "much distressed at being unable

* See Minna's letter to von Hülsen, and her husband's to Alwine Frommann, of last November; vol. iv, 342-4.—Incidentally I may remark that Tsar Nicholas died this same March 2; to Wagner, of course, it made no difference, but in a letter of the end of the month Liszt alludes to the possibility of its influencing his own "personal fate" (union with Carolyne).

to present in Germany himself." The letter to Praeger is a mere notice of advent :—

Paris, 2. March 55.

Werthester Freund,

I am on the road to you, and propose to leave here *Sunday* morning [4th] and arrive in London at the corresponding time—presumably rather late in the evening. Accordingly, if I really am to be so shameless as to drop without ceremony into the house of a friend unfortunately as yet not personally known to me, I must beg you to expect me on Sunday evening. I trust I shall not abuse your amiable hospitality for more than just that night, however, as I presume our joint efforts will succeed in finding me a nice lodging on the Monday morning; in which I heartily hope to be able to install myself forthwith, as I shall arrive at your house very tired by much exertion.*—

Perhaps you would have the kindness to inform Hogarth, quite briefly, that I shall stand at the disposal of the directors of the Philharmonic from *Monday morning?* Thus I shall keep my promise of arriving in London a week before the first concert.—

Begging you to make my best apologies to your good wife in advance, and heartily rejoicing at [the prospect of] your personal acquaintance,

Yours very faithfully

RICHARD WAGNER.

We are told nothing of the letter from Praeger to which this is an obvious reply, but that is immaterial. Neither do we know anything about the three to four days in Paris—probably spent with E. Kietz and Anders—except from a letter to Liszt of a fortnight later: "Stupidly enough, I couldn't think of the address of your children—nor of Belloni either: I went half crazy with racking my memory for them. Now, silly fool that I am, it occurs to me I need only have gone to Erard's. Consequently I had to rob myself of the pleasure of seeing them

* Praeger translates the letter fairly accurately in his English book, though he tones this sentence up: "Trusting I shall not ill-use your friendly hospitality, if only for this night, for I suppose we shall succeed in trying to find on Monday morning an agreeable lodging, in which I might at once install myself, for from the many exertions, I fear I shall come very fatigued to you." In the *German* he gets the unusual length of reproducing the first nine words of the autograph (apparently by accident), but when it comes to "*dem mir persönlich leider noch nicht bekannten Freunde*," that inconvenient clause is dropped entirely! Similarly, "if only for this night" and "Monday morning" are cast adrift, whilst Wagner is made "hope to be worthy of your hospitality."

again, which greatly distresses me. Do give me their address for the journey back."

So we follow our traveller to the Gare du Nord, the tidal service at Boulogne (the Calais boat would have landed him in the early afternoon), the miseries of mal-de-mer, and his arrival at cheerless London Bridge—the only 'continental' terminus in those days, the go-ahead S.E.R. not having spanned the Thames as yet, nor the London and Chatham yet reached Dover. It does not seem to have occurred to his expectant host that, since Wagner "spoke no English" and had only been a week in London some sixteen years ago, it would be a helpful thing to meet him at the station; it does not seem to have struck him that the stranger's features must be easily recognisable from those "graphic" descriptions repeatedly purveyed by August Roeckel (?): so Wagner has to do his own haggling with the London porters, and deposit his weary bones in that abomination of desolation, a station 'growler.' While he is trundling through the four odd miles of streets made trebly dismal by the sepulchral gloom of an English Sunday night, splashed here and there with the forbidding glare of public-houses; while he is devoting his hour of damp discomfort on mildewed slabs of cushion, with windows rattling at each granite set, to speculation on the manner of reception awaiting him at Milton Street—we will interview for ourselves his host of the night.

Grove's Dictionary, which seeks its information from the subjects of its monographs wherever possible, tells us in its vol. iii (pubd 1883) that Ferdinand Christian Wilhelm Praeger, "son of Heinrich Aloys Praeger, violinist, composer, and capellmeister, was born at Leipzig, Jan. 22, 1815. His musical gifts developed themselves very early; at nine he played the cello with ability, but was diverted from that instrument to the piano by the advice of Hummel. At sixteen [i.e. 1831?] he established himself as teacher at the Hague, meanwhile strenuously maintaining his practice of the piano, violin, and composition. In 1834 he settled in London, where he still resides, a well-known and much esteemed teacher." *

* *Riemann's Dictionary of Music* (English edition) has much the same: "PRAEGER, Ferdinand Christian Wilhelm, distinguished London teacher of music, b. Jan. 22, 1815, at Leipzig, d. Sept. 1, 1891, London, son of the

I will return to *Grove* for a précis of our Praeger's compositions and so on. Meantime it is instructive to hear what *As I knew him* tells us of his youth: "Wagner and I were born in the same town, Leipzic, and within two years of each other. This was a bond of friendship between us never severed, Wagner ever fondly delighting to talk about his early surroundings and associations. His references to Leipzic and prominent local characters [names?] were coloured with strong affection, and to discuss with one who could reciprocate his deep love [?] for the charmed city of his birth, was for him a certain source of happiness [!].—Wagner's first music-master, properly so-called, was Cantor Weinlig of Leipzic. From him he received his first serious theoretical instruction. Weinlig, too, was well known to me. He was an intimate friend of my father, Henry Aloysius Praeger, director of the Stadttheater and conductor of the famous Gewandhaus concerts, the latter post being subsequently filled by Mendelssohn among other celebrities. Between Weinlig and my father, whom the history of music has celebrated as a violinist of exceptional skill and as a sound contrapuntist, constant communications passed, and I was very often the bearer of such.

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violinist and former capellmeister at Leipzig, Magdeburg, and Hanover, Heinrich Aloys P. (b. Dec. 23, 1783, Amsterdam, d. Aug. 7, 1854, Magdeburg; composer of much chamber music, also some operas). P. at first cultivated cello-playing, but, on the advice of Hummel, turned his attention to the pianoforte. After living for a short time at the Hague as teacher of music, he settled in London in 1834. P., from the time of the foundation of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, was appointed correspondent by Schumann. He was an enthusiastic supporter of Wagner, and, through him, the latter was called to London in 1855 as conductor of the Philharmonic Concerts." . . . It really is a pity so recent an edition as that of 1902 should still uphold the long-exploded 'Philharmyth,' also that it should preserve the fable of Ferdinand's connection with the *Neue Zeitschrift* "from the time of its foundation." Schumann started his world-famed journal in 1834, but Praeger's widow herself did not claim for her late husband any earlier connection with it than the following: "Mr Praeger was appointed London Correspondent to the 'Neue Zeitschrift für Musik' by Robert Schumann, in an autograph letter [not produced] dated 5th June, 1842" (*Musical Standard*, Apr. 21, 1894); whereas the fact is irrefutable (as adduced by myself *ibid.* May 26, 94), that Praeger's name made its first appearance on that journal's list of accredited contributors in 1845, a whole year after severance of Schumann's connection therewith. Surely such unassailable results of an investigation that caused no little stir in musical circles at the time, both here and in Germany, might be deemed digestible in the re-issue of a standard work.

"Common points of interest like this—striking Leipzic individualities [still unnamed] . . . the masters of St. Nicolas' school, where we both attended, though at different periods—I could multiply without end, each topic of absorbing interest to us both, and productive of much mutual expansion of the heart" (dedication, signed 1885). P. goes on to speak of Weber and *Der Freischütz*, "first performed at Dresden, the composer conducting, on the 22d January, 1822" (for which read 26th, and note that the real "first" performance took place at Berlin the 18th of the previous June). "'Der Freischütz' was almost immediately produced at Leipzic, and Weber came to Leipzic personally to supervise the rehearsals, and to acquaint my father, then the conductor of the theatre, as to the special reading of certain parts. The work excited the utmost enthusiasm in Leipzic, and was performed there innumerable times. I, the son of the conductor, having free entry to the theatre, went nightly, and acquired thus early a thoroughly intimate acquaintance with the work, such as Wagner also had gained by his frequent visits to the Dresden theatre through his family's connection with the stage. In after-life we found that Weber and his works had exercised over both of us the same fascination."—In one paragraph, it will be observed, H. A. Praeger is "director," in the other "conductor," of the Leipzig theatre: which was it, and for how long? By the exercise of a little patience we perhaps may see.

Pages 26-7 of *As I* tell us of the return of Wagner's mother—end of 1827, after twelve to thirteen years in Dresden—"to Leipzic with the younger children and Richard with them. For ten years, from about 1818 to 1828, my father held the post of Kapelmeister at the Stadttheater, under the management of Küstner, a celebrated director. The period of Küstner's management is famous in the annals of the German stage for the high intellectual tone that pervaded the performances under his direction. . . . Of this period, actors, plays, and incidents, I had the most vivid remembrance from the close connection of my father with the theatre and the friendly intercourse of my family with the actors. Wagner would take great delight in discussing the performances and actors. He was fond, too, of hearing what I, in my boyhood, thought of the acting of his sisters, and from our frequent and intimate conversations, bearing on his youthful

impressions of the stage, he uttered many striking and original remarks which will appear later on [they never do]. A popular piece then was Weber's 'Sylvana,' in which Louisa [Wagner] performed the part of the forest child. This part apparently won the youthful admiration of both of us. Wagner's remembrance of certain incidents connected with it [but not recounted] was marvellous to me." Then pp. 32-3: "His entrance to the St. Nicolas school in 1827, where he remained three years, was as the passing through a dark cloud. The whole training here differed vitally from that at the Kreuzschule [Dresden]. The masters and their mode of tuition was [*sic*] unsympathetic to him. I did not wonder at this when he told me. I had been at the school, too, and experienced similar feelings of resentment. The Martinet system of discipline was irksome to high-spirited boys. No attempt was made to develop individuality of character. This was unfortunate for Wagner" (why not for both of you?).—Now, as Küstner's Leipzig directorship did not conclude till May 11, 1828; as the revival of *Silvana* took place there in December 1827 (a fact easily ascertainable from other sources); and as Louise Wagner retired from the stage a few months later, to get married the following June—according to this the two lads not only would have been among her audience at the selfsame time, but also would have attended the Nikolaischule (which Wagner entered Jan. 21, 1828, and left at Easter 1830, as now documentarily proved) *together* for about four months. To have "recollected" *that* companionship would have been a trump-card, since it would have rendered P.'s the longest acquaintance with Wagner on record: what a pity the authentic letters stood in the way of his playing it!

On his own shewing, we must discard the S. Nicholas school from F. Praeger's personal experiences of 1827-8; but we shall have to go still farther—for he was never there at all. Through the courtesy of Dr Max Zenker of Leipzig, a kgl. Landrichter, only the other day I received a message from the present Rector of that ancient foundation (now styled the Nicolaigymnasium) as follows: "In spite of every search, the name of Ferdinand Praeger is not to be found on our lists, which are very complete for that period." Consequently young Ferdinand either received *no* grammar-school education at Leipzig—the rival institution, the Thomana, being closed at this time for rebuilding—or, to have

completed his schooling at the establishment last-named (his only other chance of so-called 'public' education), he must have been born some years *before* he claims, therefore not at Leipzig, but presumably in Holland—with whose tongue he boasts a close familiarity in his German book (*Wagner wie ich ihn kannte*, p. 311).

A good deal would be explained, if we could establish it for certain that Ferdinand was Richard's senior in age, as that would add some pardoning years to his senility when it came to the manufacturing of his book; but to this we merely have a slender clue, which may turn out misleading—viz. the appearance of a "Praeger" on the list of members of the Gewandhaus orchestra from 1822 to 1828. This tiny fact, with others to follow, I owe to Dr Zenker's kind researches in the big privately-issued official *Geschichte der Gewandhausconcerte in Leipzig* (period Nov. 1781 to Nov. 1881—by Alfred Dörffel, printed Leipzig 1884), though we have been unable as yet to discover that Praeger's initials. However, to myself it seems unlikely that the father, Heinrich Aloys, should have been a simple member of the Gewandhaus orchestra synchronously with his conductorship at the Town-theatre (*vid. inf.*); so that, the name being by no means a common one in Germany, the alternative appears to rest between a possible elder son * and our Ferdinand himself. In the latter event Ferdinand P. would have completed his schooling about five years ere Richard Wagner's return to Leipzig with his mother, and Ferdinand thus would prove to be some six to seven years older (supposing a lad of 15 to 16 of age for such engagement), instead of two years younger, than his future idol.—This, nevertheless, is largely surmise. The solid fact remains, that when F. Praeger claims to have attended the same school as Richard Wagner, he makes an assertion at defiance with the "very complete lists for that period" of the school itself.

How about the rest of Ferdinand's claim, namely that his

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* As 3rd number on the programme of the Gewandhaus subscription-concert of Jan. 24, 1828, we find "*Concertino für die Oboe*, componiert von E. L. Praeger, vorgetragen von Hrn Rückner." Quite possibly this E. L. Praeger was the viola-player in question, seeing that his composition for the oboe was not performed by himself. Moreover, Ferdinand incidentally mentions a *brother*, just once, in further course of his book; see close of next chapter.

father had been "director"—elsewhere "Kapelmeister," and anon bare untitled "conductor"—"of the Stadttheater and conductor of the famous Gewandhaus concerts, the latter post being subsequently filled by Mendelssohn among other celebrities"? We will take the last assertion first, as it is so excessively precise. Here Heinrich Aloys P. is credited with a "post" of great distinction, and naturally we look for his enrolment on the official list of past "conductors of the famous Gewandhaus concerts." We look in vain, and what is more—a consultation even of the first volume of *Grove*, published six years ere Ferdinand wrote those words, should have made it impossible for him to contemplate so rash a pedigree-inflation. There he might have seen that the installed conductors of these "famous concerts" from 1810 to 27, and 1827 to 35, respectively, were J. P. C. Schulz and C. A. Pohlenz, the latter being immediately followed by Mendelssohn. No possible chink exists, you see, into which to squeeze poor Heinrich Aloys; for *Grove* here speaks by the card, supported by Gewandhaus records. Yet there *is* a grain of fact at bottom of this airy fancy: Heinrich Aloys did conduct four concerts at the Gewandhaus—but they figure merely in the list of so-called Extras. Dr Zenker informs me that, "where not otherwise specifically announced, these Extra-concerte at the Gewandhaus are personal undertakings of the artists or composers appearing in them, the committee simply lending its hall and orchestra on hire or free of charge"; purely private enterprises, then. The full particulars of Heinrich Aloys's four "extraneous concerts" have also been politely furnished me by Dr Zenker, backed by an official letter from the present Gewandhaus management itself. As to their programmes, they consisted chiefly of H. A. P.'s own compositions, arias, overtures, violin solos and concertos (performed by himself), and a couple of Masses. Their dates will be more to our purpose, and perhaps may even help to check the "from about 1818 to 1828" claimed by Ferdinand as the period of his father's tenure of the *theatre* conductorship. Let us broach a fresh paragraph for them:—

These concerts of Heinrich Aloys's very own, but held in the Gewandhaus-Saal, fall into two widely separated pairs. Nos. 1 and 2 occur Nov. 28, 1814, and Feb. 20, 1815; for these the concert-giver is officially described as "Musikdirektor of the Joseph Seconda German Opera company," and the second

of them is specified as "prior to his departure from Leipzig."—In passing, I may say that between these two concerts it clearly is *possible* for Ferdinand to have been "born at Leipzig, Jan. 22, 1815"; also that in old age he missed a splendid chance of linking up his helpless babyhood with Wagner's infancy, since the latter's stepfather, Ludwig Geyer, was a member of Franz Seconda's troupe of strolling players, which for years took turn about with brother Joseph's strolling opera-company (vol. i.).—To resume, this "prior to his departure from Leipzig" tells us in itself no more than that the Joseph Seconda troupe was about to make its annual flitting, not necessarily that H. A. Praeger's leave-taking was then expected to be final; still, we hear nothing authoritative of him again at Leipzig till directly after the departure thence of Christian Friedrich Schneider, end of March 1821, whereas Schneider is recorded as Musikdirector, until that date, of the Stadttheater opened by Theodor von Küstner autumn 1817. To my mind it therefore looks very much as though H. A. P. severed his connection with the Seconda troupe before its return to Leipzig autumn 1815, and that he did not present himself in that city again till Schneider's removal to Dessau offered a vacancy at the now 'standing' theatre. In any case, his second pair of "extraneous concerts" takes place the 30th April and 5th November 1821, and on their records he is now described as "Musikdirector des hiesigen Stadttheaters." Hence onward, i.e. from the Spring of 1821, his claim to musical conductorship of the Leipzig Town-theatre down to the end of Küstner's directorate in 1828 is unassailable, for we can trace him as soloist* (*not* conductor) at five regular Gewandhaus concerts the last whereof occurs in January of that year, and always with the title "Herr Musik-Direktor"; but Kapellmeister he *never* was at Leipzig.

Kapellmeister our Heinrich Aloys did afterwards become,

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* At three of these five concerts—viz. Dec. 15, 1825, Dec. 7, 1826, and that of Jan. 17, 1828—his instrument was the "Alt. Viola," the composition on the first two occasions being by F. N. Hummel, on the third by himself; but this would scarcely warrant an assumption that *he* was the aforesaid player in the ordinary band, rather that he may have trained a son of his to mastery of the 'tenor' instrument. His selection of a piece by Hummel is of additional interest, as we have already heard that Hummel advised young Ferdinand to "turn his attention to the pianoforte."

however, had his son but given it a lucid thought. This was at Hanover, within a twelvemonth of his bidding goodbye to Leipzig. It was more in the nature of an interim appointment, though, as narrated in the valuable history of *Musik in Hannover* (1903) by Dr Georg Fischer; who since has courteously informed me that H. A. P. is described in the contract signed by him Dec. 24, 1828, as "Musikdirektor in Magdeburg," that he bound himself for a twelvemonth to commence in April 1829, and before expiry of that contract he renewed it for a second term, but was allowed to leave at New Year 1831 on his representing that he had another post in view (he was here succeeded by a real "celebrity," H. Marschner). During his twenty-one months as Kapellmeister at the Hanover court-theatre Heinrich Aloys brought out seven new operas by others, and of his own compositions the overture to an opera "Die Versöhnung," overture and choruses of a Heldenspiel "Frithiof und Ingeborg," music to Volange's ballet "Arlequin's Entstehung," and various concert pieces. A fortnight before his departure from Hanover he gave a farewell concert at which, besides performances on the violin and viola, he astonished the natives with a display of virtuosity on the guitarre—an instrument he had previously played in a curiously-contrived concerted piece at the Gewandhaus concert of Nov. 15, 1823 (F. Moscheles appearing at the piano), whilst Mendel's *Musik. Convers. Lexicon* describes him as "probably the last of the guitarre-virtuosi."

Undoubtedly a versatile musician, this papa Praeger, but as no one has any further appointments to place to his account, we must presume he spent the greater part of the remainder of his life in touring as an unattached virtuoso. For it is not till 1854 that we are able to glean any further news of him, and then but a scant obituary notice in the London *Musical World* of August 12, obviously contributed by son Ferdinand, viz. "DIED.—On the 4th inst., Henry Aloys Praeger, formerly Chapelmaster to the late Duke of Cambridge at Hanover"—said Duke of Cambridge having acted as Stateholder of Hanover from 1816 to 31, and then as Viceroy until 1837, when the Duke of Cumberland replaced him as full titular King. Not a word is breathed here of the subsequent pretension to high Gewandhaus rank; but enough of that: the father plainly cut a much more dashing figure in the world than the only son with whom our history is concerned. What did he

do with his family, though, at end of what would seem to have been his longest engagement, that at Leipzig?

If Ferdinand, by his own account then aged 13, had only gone with his papa to Magdeburg, see what a glorious opportunity would have presented itself for forging another link in the chain of early recollections to be shared with Richard! For Wagner himself entered his engagement as Musikdirector there (1834-6) but five years after H. A. P. had laid down his. Yet Magdeburg wakes never a responsive echo in our Ferdinand's breast; of course he has to tell us something of Wagner's career there (mostly borrowed from Herr Glasenapp), but his nearest approach to *filial* reminiscence is a remark that "The Magdeburg company was above the usual level of provincial troupes" (*As I*, p. 51), and we find an absolute dearth even of those vague "references to prominent local characters" so drummed into our ears regarding Leipzig. What can have become of the boy, if boy he still was in 1828?

To tell the honest truth, our Ferdinand has beaten all his records by turning his own youth into a myth. Nor does that myth acquire more substantiality from its amendment by an upholder who informed us, not so many years ago, that his "mother was of English birth. Both parents wished their son Ferdinand should become a Protestant clergyman, but as he showed very early great literary and musical abilities, they gave up this plan. . . . He lived up to his sixteenth year [1831?] in Lübeck with friends [why not with his parents, and what about Leipzig?] . . . When his mother died he was compelled to earn his own living, and he conceived the idea of going to the Hague in Holland, where he commenced to give music lessons." As that was *also* in, or at end of his sixteenth year, according to *Grove*, one wonders why the Lübeck friends should have chosen the very time of his bereavement for turning him adrift, and what his father had to say to it!

It all is so deliciously inconsequent. But as we are never like to reach the bottom of the Ferdinandian myth, and really do want to be facing a tangible person ere Wagner drives up to his door, we will hurry back to *Grove's* half-column: "In Jan. 1851 he gave a recital in Paris of his own compositions with success; in 1852 he played at the Gewandhaus, Leipzig,* and at Berlin, Hamburg,

* Although it had been questioned, this at least is correct; for I learn from the Gewandhaus-Konzertdirektion (once more through Dr Zenker's kindness)

etc.; and later, in 1867, a new PF. trio of his was selected by the United German Musicians, and performed at their festival at Meiningen. He has always [!] been an enthusiast for Wagner, and it was partly owing to his endeavours that Wagner was engaged to conduct the Philharmonic Concerts in 1855 [*Grove* will have to rectify that in its coming revision of vol. iii]. He is beloved by his numerous pupils, and a concert of his compositions was organised by them in his honour, on July 10, 1879, in London. An overture from his pen entitled 'Abellino' was played at the New Philharmonic Concerts of May 24, 1854, and July 4, 1855 (under Lindpaintner and Berlioz); and a Symphonic Prelude to Manfred at the Crystal Palace, April 7, 1880. A selection of his best pieces is published in 2 vols. under the title of the 'Praeger Album' (Kahnt, Leipzig)."

From all which it appears F. Praeger was what he would himself describe as "a composer of merit," if not of such a kind as sets the Thames on fire. In January 1854 the *M. World*, then friendly to him, had reported of a concert given by the mushroom London Orchestra so-called: "Another instrumental feature was the new trio for piano, violin, and violoncello, by Mr Ferdinand Praeger, of which we have spoken so favourably in a late notice. The executants on Thursday night were Messrs Ferdinand Praeger, Sainton, and Lovell Phillips." Was that trio still "new" in 1867? Never mind. In May '54 the still friendly *M. Wd* has this to say of his as yet unchristened overture: "It was too bad to place Mr Praeger's overture to a MS. opera, which still pants for a title, at the end. If a new work be given, it should have a favourable position in the programme. It is not fair, in the face of a young [!] composer, to make his overture a voluntary involuntarily, or to press him into the ranks as a volunteer, against his will." A year later (July 7, 55) the *M. Wd* mildly chaffed it, saying that the overture "of Mr Praeger, *Abellino*—we presume (like Weber's *Ruler of the Spirits*)—is 'an early and unripe work.' 'The story of *the opera* to which this overture belongs' (we should like to hear the opera as a Wagnerian 'art-whole') 'is founded upon Jahokke's

that the 4th number on the programme of the regular Gewandhaus concert of Jan. 15, 1852, consisted of three pianoforte solos, "Allegro de Concert, Elfenmärchen, Galop fantastique, componiert und vorgetragen von Herrn Ferdinand Praeger aus London."

celebrated drama of *the same name.*' Why, then, was it not entitled 'The overture to *Jahokke?*' We are further informed that 'the character is chivalrous and *romantic*'—for which piece of intelligence are we to thank 'W. P.' or Dr Wylde? Let us tender our acknowledgment to both, lest we should be unjust to either." In the interval between those two notices I also find a friendly puff, *M. World*, Aug. 12, 54 (same issue as the obituary two lines on his father): "Mr Ferdinand Praeger has returned to London from a tour on the Rhine. The talented composer and pianist was also present at the Rotterdam Festival" (see cap. II.).

Wagner's four-wheeler must almost have reached Baker Street by now, but that last reference to Our own Correspondent suggests a train of reflections doubtless passing through F. Praeger's mind as he sat in breathless expectation. "The following incident, as showing the enmity towards Wagner prior to his landing on these shores, should be noted"—P. tells us, immediately after his transcript of the letter of Feb. 1, 55.—"It was after receiving the previous letter [Feb. 1 or Jan. 18?] that I met James Davison, the editor of the London 'Musical World,' and also musical critic of the 'Times,' at the house of Leopold de Meyer, the pianist. We had hitherto been on terms of friendship. The power of this gentleman was enormous [*Germ.* "I strolled with him to his club"]. He told me, 'I have read some of Richard Wagner's literary works; in his books he is a god, but as long as I hold the sceptre of musical criticism, I'll not let him have any chance here.' He did his utmost. With what result is matter of history." The usual strange mixture of truth and the other thing: * neither

* Truth is almost deluged by 'the other thing' in P.'s remarks on Davison and Chorley in that precious contribution to the *Neue Zeitschrift* of Jan. '56: "The musical reporter to the Athenæum is Mr Charles [misprint for Chorley] well known for his persistently hissed dramatic works, and still more for his entire lack of ability, artistic judgment and love of truth. . . . . Wagner remains the bugbear of the Times critic, who never misses a chance of making his rotten jokes on the name of the composer. Mr Davison speaks with esteem of Wagner's books in private circles, publicly he abuses them; publicly he calls Berlioz a genius, privately his music is nonsense to him; Meyerbeer's music is an abomination to him—as he says to his friends—in the Times it is the highest thing since Beethoven and Mendelssohn. It is characteristic of Mr Davison, that he often places Mendelssohn above Beethoven. The only true service this man could render to art, would be for him to exile himself, and if possible to take his confrater Mr Charles [Chorley] with him—then one might

had Davison read Wagner's "books" ere Wagner landed, nor did he consider their writer "a god" in them—far from it—but he had evidently declined to turn his coat with the same agility as a quondam member of his staff. Already having had his knife well plunged into the Old Philharmonic itself for at least the past twelvemonth, it needed more than a neophyte's eloquence to cause him to forgo rich openings for humour presented by the new conductor's reputation.—Baker Street is rather a long street for a broken-winded horse, so we still have time to scan the last few numbers of the *Musical World*. Jan. 27 writes its editor:—

Mr Anderson, Director of the Philharmonic Society, has returned from Zurich, in Switzerland. His mission has been successful. Herr Richard Wagner has agreed to conduct the first series of eight concerts, for a consideration of £200, on the strength of which he intends henceforth residing in England, with his family [blissful ignorance]. Among the attractions of the season will, no doubt, be comprised large slices from *Cola Rienzi*, *The Flying Captain*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, etc.—besides an *Apparition* or so of Franz Liszt, the Herald who has blown the trumpet and cracked his cheeks on behalf of the Music of the Future. Herr Wagner will have a broad field for his speculations in this free country, where any one may think and write as he pleases. Now is the time for an adventurous publisher (Mr Sampson Low?) to translate and print "the tracts." The new Gospel of Harmony, the Gospel of St Richard, should be preached in advance; or when the apostle comes he may not be understood. That would be a pity. We are doing our best for him, with the assistance of one of our most valued contributors [apparently J. V. Bridgeman], whose translations of Herr Sobolewski's *Reactionary Letters* will be devoured with a keener appetite since that the result of the Philharmonic mission has come to light.

If Wagner conquers England, and wins the heart of John Bull, he will accomplish what his prophet, Liszt, could not—even in his prime, before his hair

"Was greyly scattered o'er his thoughtful brow."

The Philharmonic Directors must be up and stirring. They have got Richard, and must make the most of him. We already read, in the *Daily News* [Hogarth], that half Germany is pitted against the other half, in a contest about his merits. But this is only half and

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readily forgive the pair of them the heap of nonsense they have been trying to spread with so much *aplomb* for years since. To this, and all the above, I subscribe my name with true conviction, Ferdinand Praeger." And with Davison he had "hitherto been on terms of friendship," save the mark!

half. The Society must go to work stoutly—XXX and wholesale. What is the use of a lettered secretary [Hogarth]—one who writes English as well and to the point as Kohler, Pohl, Brendel, Liszt, or any of the tractarians? Let the book of *Kunstwerk der Zukunft* be put into his hands, reduced into vernacular, and published in the *Illustrated London News*, with portraits of Herr Wagner, his herald and his apostles. The book of *Opéra et Drame* may follow, when a clear understanding has been come to with Mr E. T. Smith, who yearns for some startling novelty, to replace the pantomime and stop up the gap which has been left by G. V. B.

Our readers may not be acquainted with the philosophic system of Herr Richard Wagner. It is simply this. Where there is a concurrence of arts, in a work of art, no one art must be "insulted" by being assigned a position subordinate to the rest. Thus, in an opera, the poet, the scene-painter, the decorator, the *costumier*, the machinist, the dancing-master, and the composer must all play an equal part, so that they may march from the theatre, arm in arm, thoroughly satisfied with each other and themselves, assured that not one of the "seven" has done more or less than the others to delight and edify the public. On this plan the seven directors of the Philharmonic might concoct a *Lohengrin* among them.

The manner in which Herr Wagner carries out this system is peculiar. It is not with him, in the language of Wordsworth—"*We* are seven"—but, simply, *I* am seven! Herr Wagner is his own poet, scene-painter, decorator, *costumier*, machinist, dancing-master, and musician. Like Hercules, he performs all the seven labours himself; and this is why he will not have any of the arts he represents "insulted" by being made subordinate. His own dancing-master, he cannot sanction the prostration of Terpsichore at the altar of Euterpe—respecting himself not less highly as an inventor of *pirouettes* [Davison's playfulness] than as a composer of music. Moreover, Herr Wagner is his own *chef-d'orchestre*, and knows how to conduct himself; and finally, being his own critic and historian, he is better able to give an account of himself and his works than any of the profound calumniators of the pen, mis-termed "*Aristarchi*."

The disciples of Herr Wagner, who help to spread his doctrine, and write books, are fond of styling him the great "*word-painter*" (why not word-*composer*, word-*dresser*, word-*decorator*, word-*maker*, or word-*caperer*, as well?) This same word-painting,* about which such a fuss is made, is the soul of that system of equality of arts, whereof the

* This *must* be some allusion to Köhler's *Melodie der Sprache* (cf. iv, 153*n*), as "Kohler" has just been mentioned above. It is scarcely necessary to inform the present reader that "word-painting," as generally understood, is the opposite of Wagner's "doctrine."

Kunstwerk der Zukunft is the Koran. To every word and syllable there must be an exact equivalent of music, nor more nor less; or else Wagner the poet would be apt to charge Wagner the musician with impertinence. Every personage in the septology, moreover, must have a certain musical phrase, to mark his coming and his going, whenever he comes and goes; and this musical phrase belongs to that personage and to no other. It is a pity that Herr Wagner cannot add acting and singing to his accomplishments (dancing and fiddling it would be preposterous to expect). He might then play all the parts, and a perfect *Lohengrin* be anticipated.

However, *finis coronat opus*. We shall see what we shall see. In an elaborate panegyric of Hector Berlioz, Herr Wagner concludes with this desolating sentence:—"What a pity he is *not* a musician!" [Not quite that]. Were we to write the panegyric of Richard Wagner, seven in one, we might conclude with greater justice, in another style:—'What a pity he *is* a musician!'"

Good-humoured banter enough, if the humour sometimes falls a little flat; but nothing, so far, to substantiate the threat attributed to Davison; whilst his knowledge of the "books" is transparently second-hand, derived from those trashy *Reactionary Letters* of Herr Facing-both-ways Sobolewski—a man who persistently miscalls the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* "Neue Leipziger Musikalische Zeitung." Then Feb. 10, after a fortnight's silence, we have another leader in the *Musical World*:—

Now that the period of Richard Wagner's arrival approaches, it is well for Philharmonic subscribers to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with his art-doctrine, in order that they may easier comprehend his hidden meanings, and appreciate the subtler beauties of his compositions. We shall aid them to the best of our ability, by expounding, on fit occasions, whatever we have the wit to fathom. Our "line," however, not being interminable, there are likely to be many soundings too deep for us to "make"—like Bottom's dream, in Shakspere, so called because it had "no bottom." In such cases we shall appeal to those, who, having engaged Herr Wagner as Conductor of the Philharmonic Concerts, must be well versed in his philosophy, and steeped by anticipation in the "music of the future." Just now, perusing the fourth "Reactionary Letter" of Herr Sobolewski, we stumbled on a rock a-head. In alluding to the revival of Sophocles' *Antigone*, with music composed by Mendelssohn at the instigation of His Majesty King Clicquot, Richard, sneering as usual, is more than usually obscure. "How charmed," he says, "were the erudite old boys with this *Antigone* at the Royal Potsdam theatre!" The sneer is intelligible; but the context is mysterious. Let Wagner speak himself

in diction that would bother Mr Oxenford, and set Mr Carlyle speculating on the confusion that proceeded from the overthrow of Babel by Divine interposition. "*Sie liessen aus der Höhe. . . .*"* Now we humbly address ourselves to Mr Anderson (who went to Zurich and ministered to Richard); we humbly address ourselves to that gentleman, and his brother directors of the Philharmonic, for an explanation of the above. What is it about?—to what does it refer?—how does it affect *Antigone?*—wherein does it influence the "music of the future," which the union of Sophocles and Mendelssohn would somehow appear to have offended?—what? how? wherein? why? It was no use consulting the free translation of our learned contributor . . . Since our last number was published, and the fourth "Reactionary" appeared, with Herr Wagner's apostrophe exhibited in the phraseology of "our own translator"—like Barnum's mermaid in the glass case—we have applied to at least a dozen linguists for an explanation of the passage. In vain. They shook their heads, looked grave, and said —"It means something, no doubt, but what it means you must discover for yourself." . . . Thus circumstanced, "our own translator" was requested to draw up a new translation, *verbatim et literatim.* He did so with an ill grace; and we now place it before Messrs Anderson, Card, Clinton, M'Murdie, Chatterton [read, "Williams"], Lucas, and Sainton, for their consideration. . . .

Will the Directors of the Philharmonic Society, men of letters as well as notes, afford us, in their courtesy, a clue of some sort, by which we may be able to untangle this complex web? If not, will they place it before their secretary, one of the most enthusiastic apostrophisers of the "music of the future?" [Another "first champion" then? In the press, too—*Daily News.*] Mr Hogarth might reduce it into *plain* from occult sense, make it exoteric instead of esoteric, and have it printed on a circular, ready to deliver when subscribers call upon Mr Addison, of Regent-street, for their tickets. Failing in this, there is but one resource—viz.: to apply to Dr Liszt. At Weimar, engaged intently on a new book of [? "on"] *Lohengrin,* and ever anxious to hold a torch by which the gospel of St Richard may be revealed, Dr Liszt will readily proceed, not for the first time by many, to do for Wagner what Proclus did for Plato, Taylor for Aristotle, and St Thomas Aquinas for the Immaculate Conception. ("*Quare,*" etc., etc.) List—list!—Oh Liszt! Enlighten our dulness, open our eyes—or lend us thy spectacles, that we may read the books, and not be lost to the future destinies of

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* Cf. *Prose Works* II. 190 and 191. I must remark that Sobolewski idiotically tacks on to the *end* of this the "Heilige Antigone . . . erlösen!" passage from Wagner's *preceding* and linearly fenced-off paragraph. How much for Praeger's vaunted reading of "the books" (p. 60 *sup.*), when his letter of the following March neglects so pat an opening for retort?

harmony, into which thou peerest, through a telescope as long as from Weimar to Leipsic. List!—list!—Oh Liszt! Come to our aid; or, if thou canst not come, send Pohl to save us! Remember that Richard is on the way. His shadow is before him on the rail, as far as Cöln. He will be here shortly, and then it may be too late. Send the books—the books—all the books! In them there may be hope.

Honestly, is there any spite in this article, any manifestation of irrevocable "enmity"? With all his solid erudition, Davison was ever a wag, and could not be expected to let pass so fine an opportunity for exercise of waggishness; but it all is very harmless badinage, and one cannot help feeling that a little tact on the *other* side might easily have turned it into tolerant good-will, though "red-hot enthusiasm" of course was not to be anticipated.

Beyond these two articles and the passages already quoted in cap. II., the only other editorial mention of Wagner in the *M. World* "prior to his landing on these shores" occurs in course of a leader on Cherubini, Feb. 17: "Who can think of Händel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, or Mendelssohn, without recurring to the many beautiful tunes (yes, *tunes*—ye disciples of Wagner and the 'future!') with which they have enriched the world of melody. . . . But others who are not French, nor maniacs and Wagnerites neither, have risen to the skies in eulogising the genius and learning of Cherubini. We never could see anything so very unfathomable as all this in his dramatic overtures . . although two or three of them are fine enough. . . . Moreover, it is doubtful whether Cherubini was what Richard Wagner terms 'a good rider.'—These and other matters, however, will be better understood when 'the books' are forthcoming. Dr Liszt must send the books without delay"; together wherewith I may class, from the same issue, "Rolle was a man of note in his day. Like Richard he was a *Kapellmeister*—only *not* at the important town of Zurich," and the playful line on Praeger's being about to "have Richard with him, and the 'books'" (*cf.* 60 *sup.*).

Unfortunately, Praeger himself was burning the boats for Wagner even before that landing, by the wellnigh incredible gaucherie he contributed to the "New York Musical Gazette" of the 24th of February 1855, and therefore must have mailed to it in the interval between the first two of Davison's pleasantries just cited. Himself he reproduces "parts" of it on pp. 220-1 of *As I knew him*, after stating that "The article was summarized

in the London musical papers, and immediately a shower of virulent abuse fell upon me which, however, at no period affected in the slightest my ardour for Wagner's cause." How he could be proud of the thing, one wonders when one reads the part not "summarized" but textually held up to scorn by the *M. World* a few weeks later:—

To see Wagner and Berlioz, the two most ultra red republicans in music existing, occupying the two most prominent positions in the musical world of this classical, staid, sober, proper, exclusive, conservative London, is an unmitigatedly "stunning" fact. We are now ready for anything, and nothing can astonish us more. Some of our real old cast-iron conservatives will never recover from this shock—among others, the editor of the London *Musical World*. This estimable gentleman is in a truly deplorable state, whereby his friends are caused much concern. The engagement of Wagner seems to have affected his brain, and from the most amiable of men and truthful of critics, he has changed to the—well, see his journal. He lavishes abuse, in language no less violent than vehement, upon Wagner and all who will not condemn "poor Richard" without hearing him. Wagner once wrote an article, *Das Judenthum in der Musik* ("Judaism in Music"), in which he conclusively proves that a Jew is not a Christian, and neither looks, nor *feels*, nor talks, nor moves like one, and, consequently, does not compose like a Christian either.* And in that same article, which is written with exceeding cleverness, Wagner makes a severe onslaught upon Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer on Judaistic grounds. The editor of the London *Musical World*, considering himself one of Mendelssohn's heirs, and Mendelssohn having (so it is said) hated Wagner, ergo, must the enraged editor also hate him. He certainly seems to do so, *con molto gusto*.

Apart from the vulgarity of the whole tone, the personal girding unrelieved by a glimmer of wit, no enemy could have done Praeger's protégé a much worse turn than to drag that unfortunate *Judenthum* affair to light at such a juncture. In his supplement to the second edition of *Das Judenthum in der Musik* (1869) Wagner remarks that "in further course of his effusions, Herr Davison did not hesitate to hold me up to public odium as blasphemer of the greatest composers for reason of their Judaism"; how carefully, then, must this busy London host

* The "either. And" is the version reprinted in the *M. World* of May 12, 55; more likely to be accurate than Praeger's book-variant "; and." A very trifling detail, but I don't wish to be taxed with misquotation.

have concealed from him the source of D.'s information! The first of those silly *Reactionary Letters* (published a week before the editor of the *M. Wd* had any idea of the invitation to Wagner) had mentioned "Spohr, the 'Ridiculous' . . . Auber, the 'Thief'; Meyerbeer, the 'Jew'—because Hebrew verbs have but two tenses and no future" as having "vanished in the opinion of those who take up their position with Wagner"; but even Sobolewski—who drags in Spohr for no accountable reason—has nothing whatever to say on the *Judenthum* article or its very mild rating of Mendelssohn. Nobody in London, except Professor Parallax, appears to have been so much as aware of its existence. In the *Neue Zeitschrift* of 1850 it was signed with a pseudonym, and we have seen how courageously Brendel refused to deliver up its writer's name (iii, 93-4): * here we have Praeger proclaiming it unasked, and certainly unauthorised! How *he* came to know of it, is another question. As correspondent to the *N. Z.*, he would naturally have read the fulmination at the time of its issue; the Hebrew-owned *Grenzboten* of 1851, with its assertive denunciation of Wagner as the article's author, may have done the rest for him. In some odd corner of his marine-store of miscellaneous information the bomb must have lain for four years; he flings it at the very moment when a friend of prudence would have buried it for good. Of course he flung it with no idea of harming Wagner, simply of wounding his late "friend" Davison; but from the day of that New York paper's arrival in London, under a fortnight after that of Wagner himself, the Mendelssohn-Judaism petard is added to Davison's armoury, and rancour gradually replaces jest. Nor is this by any means

* When Praeger says on p. 207 of *As I knew*: "Of course there was no attempt at withholding the name of the real author; it was at once admitted"—he is making a misstatement for which there can be no possible excuse, as it is at direct variance with Wagner's own account of the true history, embodied in the pamphlet of 1869 and reprinted in vol. viii of the *Ges. Schr.* (see *Prose* III. 102-3). Moreover, though the article, signed "K. Freigedank," had appeared in the *N. Z.* of Sept. 1850, in April 1851 Liszt writes to Wagner, "Can you tell me, under the seal of the most absolute secrecy, whether the famous article on Judaism in Music in Brendel's paper is by you?"—and in the *N. Z.* of July 4, 51, Brendel himself most studiously refers to the author as "Herr Freigedank." That Wagner's authorship had meantime been suspected, here and there in Germany, is quite another matter: it was never publicly avowed by any *friend* of his—a word I needs must underline—till many years thereafter.

a solitary instance of Praeger's blazing indiscretion in the first half of 1855, as we shall learn hereafter; if at that year's commencement a pitying Providence had struck the goose-quill from his hand for aye, it might have fared far otherwise with Wagner's cause in London.

But here is the anomaly. In private life, by all accounts, particularly those of his old pupils, Ferdinand Praeger was a most obliging man, if fussy; one of those people who "wouldn't hurt a fly," or as Wagner presently calls him, *eine gute Seele* (a good soul). Dr Klindworth himself, no champion of Praeger's veracity, bears witness to his amiability of character: "His lively, chatty temperament, his constant readiness for little services in the master's interest, his good-nature that lent itself so cheerfully to Wagner's banter, made him useful and agreeable to the latter" (*Bayr. Bl.* 1898). A man of about the same stature as Richard Wagner—naturally excepting the head—he was a bustling little piece of 'geniality' and domestic virtue. Married to a handsome lady of French extraction, decidedly his mental superior, our Anglo-Dutch musician of merit must now be pictured as waiting on tiptoe for his unknown guest's arrival, in a snug but unpretentious home equipped by honest industry in lesson-giving.

Even a London Bridge cab-horse will cover its four miles at last; so at the door of 31 Milton Street,* Dorset Square, "Wagner arrived at midnight precisely on Sunday," March 4, '55. We are not apprised of the first greeting's warmth, nor even if the weary traveller was offered supper—but will take that for granted. His host's main concern seems to have been to set his midnight visitant at the examination-desk right off, for we plunge straight into: "If I had not already acquired through the graphic letters of August Roeckel † an insight into the peculiarities of Richard

* Now re-named "Balcombe Street," practically a continuation north of Great Quebec Street. Unless the numbers have been changed—which does not seem likely—no. 31 still exists, but in a very dingy, uninviting condition. Fifty years ago it may have been bright and pleasant enough, yet never more than a narrow little box of bricks among its elbowing fellow-boxes.

† Already I have stated my supreme disbelief in the existence of those "graphic letters," and furnished one small but striking evidence of the spuriousness of the specimens alleged to be drawn therefrom in Praeger's book (see p. 66 *sup.*). Moreover, it would have been quite impossible for August Roeckel to have *promised* Wagner joy from this acquaintance, as he

Wagner's habits of thought, power of grasping profound questions of mental speculation, whilst relieving the severity of serious discourse by the intermingling of jocular ebullitions of fancy, I was soon to have a fair specimen of these wondrous qualities. One of the many points in which we found ourselves at home, was the habit of citing phrases from Schiller or Goethe, as applicable to our subjects of discussion, as often ironically as seriously. To these we added an almost interminable dictionary of quotations from the plays and operas of the early part of the century. These mental links were, in the course of a long and intimate friendship, augmented by references to striking qualities, defects or oddities, our circle of acquaintances forming a means of communication between us which might not inaptly be likened to mental shorthand. Nothing could have exceeded the hilarity, when, upon showing him, at an advanced hour [*Germ.* "late in the morning"] to his bedroom, he enthusiastically said, 'August was right; we shall understand each other thoroughly!' [Ahem!—*Wie* adds: "I look forward, in this meeting, to a long true friendship."] I felt in an exalted position, and dreamed that, like Spontini, I had received a new decoration from some potentate which delighted me, but the pleasant dream soon turned to nightmare, when I could find no room on my coat to place the newly acquired bauble. The next morning I found the signification of the dream. Exalted positions have their duties as well as their pleasures, and it became my duty to acquaint Wagner that a so-called 'Necker' hat (*i.e.* a slouched one) was not becoming for the conductor of so conservative a society as the Philharmonic, and that it was necessary that he should provide himself with a tall hat, indeed, such headgear as would efface all remembrance of the social class to which his soft felt hat was judicially assigned."—In such touches F. P. is inimitable, and a strict autobiography, i.e. one *all* about himself, might have provided us capital fun.

The "mental links" that really bound this *gute Seele* to his London guest were far more simple. In the spring of 1857 a certain Dr Gerber, a Saxon refugee established as London practitioner in the middle fifties, had warned Wagner, on what grounds we

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did not answer Wagner's letter, announcing the London expedition, till the new guest had been several weeks here.

know not, that Praeger was "betraying him and abusing his confidence"; Wagner cannot believe it, but replies to Carl Klindworth May 18: "In any case it must surely have been clear to you that my intercourse with him [P.] was very superficial. If it nevertheless was pretty frequent, that came from my passionately earnest nature, which makes me rather seek in company of that sort the satisfaction of a need of nonchalance, of easy-going relaxation, than anything else. I look for bonhomie then (*Bequemlichkeit*), and am lightly won by pleasantness and pliancy (*Gefälligkeit und Geschmeidigkeit*); moreover, at such times I like to have someone at hand I can chaff a little (*ein wenig hänseln*), which does me good. This, look you, was the substance of my intercourse with Präger, and you may judge if I ever can come into the situation of being *betrayed* by him: it's sheer impossible! For myself, I've never had occasion yet to think him seriously over; but don't go frightening yourself for my sake. It is impossible for Präger to abuse my 'confidence'; in *that* position he certainly is not toward me" (letter quoted by Glasenapp).

That letter, written a few weeks before Praeger's return-visit, is worth a ream of explanations. But, with characteristic unsuspectingness, Wagner forgot that it is just these passive butts one chaffs, or hoaxes, that may become extremely dangerous if once they take the recollector's pen in hand. When you are dead they can claim you as a boon-companion, if only for a season; on the strength of that, their tortured reminiscences pass current as a bosom-friend's. Far safer to keep from their earshot entirely; the moment's jest so easily is turned in after years to solemn earnest, if self-inflation be the aim. That dreadful recollector's pen, when guided by a piebald memory!—

Little time can Wagner have been allowed to sleep his journey off, for it passes belief what expeditions Praeger makes him crowd into Monday morning, March 5. After taking "the composer of 'Tannhäuser' to the best West End hatter [*Wie*, "in Regent Street"], where, after an onslaught on the sons of Britannia and their manias, we succeeded in fitting a hat on that wondrous head of the great thinker," P. and he "drove from the hatmaker straight to the city to inquire after a box containing the compositions Wagner had been requested to bring over with him. The box had arrived"—presumably at London Bridge with its owner's personal effects the night before, but missed for want of

a helping hand. "Then we continued our peregrination back to the West, alighting at Nottingham Place [York Gate], the residence of Mr Anderson. The old [!] gentleman possessed all the suave, gentle manners of the courtier, and all went well during the preliminary conversation about the projected programme, until Mr Anderson mentioned a prize symphony of Lachner as one of the intended works to be performed. Wagner sprang from his seat, as if shot from a gun, exclaiming loudly and angrily, 'Have I therefore left my quiet seclusion in Switzerland to cross the sea to conduct a prize symphony by Lachner? no; never! If that be a condition of the bargain I at once reject it, and will return . . . no Kapellmeister music; and that of a Lachner, bah!' Mr Anderson sat aghast in his chair," and so forth.—A tale to be taken *cum grano*, though it seems *founded* on truth, as the *M. World* of March 17 states that "The *Pastorale* and a 'Prize-Symphony' by Herr Lachner, had been first selected; but Herr Wagner said, on his arrival, that, with only one rehearsal and an orchestra unknown to him, he would prefer something more familiar; and so the *Eroica* and the Haydn symphony were substituted. We should have thought the *Eroica* less 'familiar' and more difficult than the *Pastorale*. But Herr Wagner, who has views of his own, and conducts *without the score*, probably knew the *Eroica* 'by heart,' and *not* the *Pastorale*. It was indispensable that he should make a good display at his first concert; and so the Director let him have his way."

"Our next visit was an unclouded one"—says Praeger, after devoting two pages to the Lachner episode—"We went to call on Sainton, who was as refined a soloist as he was an intelligent and energetic orchestral leader. His jovial temperament, Gasconic fun (born at Toulouse), his good and frank nature, pleased Wagner at once. Charles Lüders, a German musician, 'le frère intime' of Sainton, formed the oddest contrast to his friend's character. Quiet, reflective, and somewhat old-fashioned, he nevertheless became an ardent admirer of Wagner's music, and proved that 'extremes meet,' for in his compositions, and they are many,* known in Germany and in France, the good Lüders

* Any published? The name does not occur in *Grove*, *Riemann*, or *Mendel*. On the other hand we find a Lüders, perhaps father of Charles, conductor at the Hanover court-theatre just twelve years prior to H. A. Praeger's engagement there.

tenaciously clung to the traditions of a past period. We soon identified him in gentle fun with the 'contrapuntista.' Notwithstanding the marked contrast of the quartette, Wagner, Sainton, Lüders, and myself, we harmonized remarkably well, and many were our pleasant, convivial meetings during the time of Wagner's stay in London. As Sainton had always been very intimate with Costa, and was his recognized deputy in his absence, he accompanied us on the first visit to the Neapolitan conductor, Wagner expressing a wish to make Costa's acquaintance. This was the only visit of etiquette Wagner paid. He sternly refused to pay any more, no matter on whom, and I gladly desisted from advocating any, though he suffered severely in consequence from a press which stigmatized him as proud and unsociable.

"We went home to dine"—and high time too, for there was still apartment-hunting to be done, with none too many hours of daylight. However, we may console ourselves: Wagner was not so barbarously treated, in truth, his first morning in London. The call on Anderson, probably in the presence of Hogarth (really an "old gentleman," aged 72), was the only one that day; for Sainton, whom Wagner describes to Otto Wesendonck a fortnight later as "a perfect oasis in the desert," relates that the composer made his first call on him *alone*, at 9 a.m., and therefore obviously next day. Dr Hueffer's *Quarterly* article is our authority: "M. Sainton relates that, one morning in February [early March], at 9 a.m., a youthful-looking German called on him in full evening dress [would Praeger have allowed that?], in order to pay him an official visit as one of the Philharmonic directors. At first their intercourse was a little formal, and slightly impeded by Wagner's imperfect knowledge of French; but soon the ice began to thaw, and before an hour was over the two were chatting as if they had known each other for years, and from that moment they were fast friends, and remained, during Wagner's stay in London, inseparable. Wagner had few other acquaintances, and not being able to speak our language, was practically debarred from English society."—One ninepin rolls another down: together with the personally-conducted call on Sainton must fall that paid to Costa. If such a visit took place at all, it is far more likely to have been paid in company of Sainton solus; according to the above, it would have been a young deputation.

Something of greater moment. In none of the London press

criticisms of 1855 perused by me, "and they are many," have I come across anything resembling a charge that Wagner was "proud and unsociable" (that belongs to Munich, ten years after); but it is a matter for sincere regret that Praeger himself was in no position then to advocate a call on DAVISON. Doubtless Anderson, Hogarth and Sainton all strongly urged it, for Wagner writes Otto, March 20: "Here I am advised to call on so-and-so, for instance Davison (*Times*), Chorley, etc. . . as it would be a pity for me to let my abilities and talents run to waste here. I don't know what *you* think about it, but I can't help thinking I have nothing at all to seek here; and for that I certainly don't need the recommendation of blackguards" (*Lumpen*). Similarly to Liszt, April 4 (see cap. V.): "The thought of taking a step of any kind to win over this blackguard crew of journalists, revolts me like poison." Of course it was no longer to be thought of at the latter of these dates, and might have been read as weakness at the former; but to have paid a call at Davison's office, and had everything out with him *before* the first concert, would have been a master-stroke of policy, if only someone like Hogarth or Sainton had gone with him as introducer. For it certainly is not to either of *these* two advisers, that we must assign the opinion dotted out above, viz. "they are blackguards and numskulls indeed, but have their influence."

With all his half-fledged preconceptions, and despite P.'s fickle innuendoes, James Davison bears the character of an unimpeachably honest 'gentleman,' richly gifted with the sense of humour. If only *he* had been won to a smiling neutrality, H. F. Chorley of the *Athenæum*—deeply committed against Wagner through his *Modern German Music*, pubd spring '54 *—might have

* In January 1850, when Wagner's exile was in its infancy and his every scheme *in nubibus*, Liszt had written him: "Paris and perhaps London are absolutely essential to the present and future of your career. . . . One of these days I shall write direct to an excellent friend of mine (Mr Chorley), who will give me the necessary information, and stand up for you during your stay in London." No doubt Liszt did write to Chorley then, since the latter came to Weimar for the production of *Lohengrin*. But that event itself would seem to have been the beginning of an estrangement between these two men, if we may judge by the absence of all mention of Chorley in Liszt's published correspondence (save for the two brief sentences adduced in cap. V. *inf.*) till we arrive at a solitary letter of condolence, written by C. Dec. '59, in which occurs this passage: "Malgré les questions de la polémique—(peut-être

pounded away in vain. For my own part I haven't the smallest doubt that, once the difficulty of tongue surmounted (and Davison seems to have known at least a smattering of French and German), Wagner and the dreaded *Times* critic would have got on swimmingly, precisely owing to their common sense of humour. The author of *Opera and Drama* could easily have laughed down the parody of his tenets supplied by the bungling "Reactionary," and still more easily have satisfied James Davison that his idol Mendelssohn was in no danger of dethronement. As to Meyerbeer their estimates would naturally differ; but Meyerbeer (never a friend of Mendelssohn's) was not as yet, if ever, an absolute article of faith with Davison, and Wagner might have agreed to sink that difference in exchange for a little more civility on Davison's side towards Liszt. The preposterous idea that he himself desired to banish Beethoven and Weber, Mozart and Haydn, Gluck and Spohr, to the lumber-room, would have been dispelled in the merry twinkling of an eye; and—Davison might have haply taught him in return the true inwardness of "Parallax," saving future generations a world of trouble.

Can the last possibility have formed one motive for Praeger's "glad desistence from advocating" such a visit? Davison would be certain to let that pussy from its bag. But what a mercy it would have been! To Wagner the smallest cordiality with the critic of the *Times* would have meant his freeing from the rather dismal confines of a foreign colony, the transformation of London into a place of concourse with the best of England's brains. Five years hence he was to be welcomed with open arms by artists and men of letters in Paris; why not in our metropolis now? "Among his friends he was proud to number Dickens,

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inévitables)—je crois que vous auriez toujours un peu d'amitié pour moi: ainsi, je ne puis pas vous oublier, en apprenant que vous avez été frappé par un coup sérieux"—the death of Liszt's son. Between these two events the only private reference of Chorley's that I know of is contained in a letter to the poet Freiligrath, undated but obviously of early '55: "Your sister will be interested (perhaps) to hear that Liszt's idol, Herr Wagner, is coming to England absolutely under engagement to conduct our Philharmonic concerts" (extract kindly furnished me by the executors of F. Freiligrath's daughter). So frigid is this allusion, we may be certain that Wagner's advances would have been thrown away on stiff-necked Chorley; doubly certain when we read his public comments in the *Athenæum* of Jan. 27 (see App.), compared with which James Davison's are wellnigh cordial.

Thackeray, Shirley Brooks, and other English literary men," says *Grove* regarding this same Davison whom Parallax taught the stranger within his gates to rate as blackguard;* can we not imagine what a decent understanding with him might have led to? We have just read the names of Oxenford and Carlyle in one of Davison's leaders: behold two German scholars it would have been a positive boon for Wagner to mix with, and surely a boon not out of reach! Without letting one's fancy run riot among the possibilities of an interview between the Sage of Chelsea and the Artist of the Future, both of them such admirers of Goethe, one can easily conceive the heartiness with which Wagner would have greeted the English unearther of Schopenhauer (*Westminster Review*, two years previously; cf. *Prose Works* VI. 60).

Of course if Davison was represented to him as nothing but another Schladebach, a type with which he had been made but too familiar in his native land, there would be nothing to tempt Wagner to his acquaintance, everything to keep him from it. The exile must restrict his London intercourse to foreign settlers, and learn from Praeger to dislike a nation he never at first hand knew: "You taught me to know the Herrn Engländer"—Wagner writes him Nov. '70—"I have only to think of various data told me by yourself, to be clear at once anent the character of this strangely ragamuffin (*verlumpten*) nation. God rest their souls! Amen!" It would have been to everyone's advantage, then, if Papa Roeckel had clean forgotten the gossip's address. A moderately good hotel would have been far the best place for Wagner to alight at for his first few days in London; whilst

* To whom else can we attribute the basis of Wagner's remark to Otto of April 5, concerning Davison and Chorley: "they are paid to keep me down, and thus they earn their daily bread"? To a similar, but public remark by P.'s American editor—"Fancy the editor of the *Musical World* having any 'personal experience' other than pecuniary, and that disastrous to his victim, with any one!"—Davison indignantly replied (*M. Wd* May 12, 55): "While many may differ from us in opinion, there is not an artist, native or foreign, who can tax us with ever on any occasion having discredited the position we have the honour to maintain. Such foul aspersions are unworthy a public journalist. Happily, nevertheless, the English press is so represented that not one living being can honestly cast a stone at any one of its representatives. They may be wrong, even incompetent; but they are upright and honest to a man."

Hogarth (Dickens' father-in-law, by the way), Anderson or Sainton, could quickly have shewn him his way about town.

But we must take things as we find them: dinner at Milton Street is nearly over; let us hurry back.

"A repast in his society might well be described as a 'feast of reason and flow of soul'"—says Wagner's original host—"for, mixed in odd ways, were the most solid remarks of deep, logical intuition, with the sprightliest, frolicsome humour. Wagner ate very quickly, and I soon had occasion to notice the fatal consequences of such unwise procedure, for although a moderate eater, he did not fail to suffer severely from such a pernicious practice." The "moderate eater" is true, the "very quickly" is possible, but a caveat has to be entered against the succeeding remark: "This first day afforded a side-light upon the master's peculiarities. Never having been used to the society of children, he was plainly awkward in his treatment of them, which we did not fail to perceive whenever my little boy was brought in to say 'good-night.'" Children's manners do vary so, but Wagner *was* fairly "used to their society"; tho' unblest throughout his first wedlock with what he longed for, a child of his own, his household at Riga at least had included a quite juvenile relation of his wife's (cf. i, 255), whilst his Dresden friend G. Kietz has this to say: "How fond he was of children, I had occasion to observe on all our walks"—confirmed by his own charming letter of 1859 to Myrrha Wesendonck. However, *Wie* tells us that "Wagner hardly knew how to take hold of the little one"; so that we are all at sea again, as there is the best of reasons to believe the little chap was out of long-clothes—the stumbling-block to almost all mere males.

The next step that Monday afternoon, if P.'s tale aspires to consecution, was to find the lodgings already suggested by Anderson (p. 85*n sup.*). "As soon as we had discovered a fitting apartment at Portland Place,* Regent's Park, within a few minutes' walk of my house"—quoth our cicerone—"the first thing he wanted was an easel for his work, so that he might stand up to score. No sooner was that desire satisfied than he insisted on an eider-down quilt for his bed. Both these satisfied desires

* Impossibly a misprint, as it is repeated a dozen pages later, also in the corresponding German passages.

are illustrative of Wagner. He knew not self-denial. It was sufficient that he wished, that his wish should be gratified. When he arrived in London his means were limited, but nevertheless the satisfaction of the desires was what he ever adhered to." He might have "desired" rooms in Buckingham Palace with as good prospect of gratification, as in Portland Place; yet "in spite of my dear apartment"—he writes Otto, March 20—"I have no absolute extravagance in view, and consequently hope to save," though he does complain that "one cannot get about at all here without a fearful lot of money." Of course he couldn't, poor fellow,—shoved into so remote a corner as he was. The real address, if P.'s memory had been less of a sieve, was 22 Portland Terrace, Regent's Park, as may be seen at top of sundry of the master's London letters.

Before going farther, we must obtain a definite notion of these four-month lodgings; for, oddly enough, the situation generally assigned them is hopelessly out. "At the south-east corner of Regent's Park," says my usually so accurate friend Herr Glasenapp, thence inferring that they were within an easy walk of Hanover Square—as, indeed, on that hypothesis they might have been. Indirectly no doubt, the above inexcusable blundering of a long-naturalised Londoner is responsible for my Russo-German friend's mistake, which has caused me endless trouble; for, no such Terrace now existing in that region, I had lately instituted antiquarian inquiries on the spot (of course, all fruitless), when it occurred to me to visit the British Museum and consult a Post Office Directory of 1855 itself. And what did I find set down there, in the Streets division? "Portland Terrace, Regent's Park (from High Street to S. John's Wood Place)"—plainly on the *opposite* side of this hardly diminutive pleasaunce. Further, looking up S. John's Wood Place (now defunct), I found it described as "North Gate, Regent's Park": the scent was getting hot. A Post Office map of the period, however, was so inconsiderate as to leave a number of streets on this Portland Town side, tho' well enough drawn, without distinctive names, and I nearly wore my eyes out searching to no purpose for S. J. W. Place and Portland Terrace. Not to be beaten, I got out a Directory of 1905, and to my intense astonishment I found that a few houses of our Terrace still existed on the printed list, tho' the map was, if anything, more reticent than ever. Still, there it stood in type

upon that list: "Portland Terrace, Regent's Park (High Street to Chalbert Street)"—the erst "S. John's Wood Place" having clearly undergone a 'whitewashing.' So I determined to hunt this only remnant of our Terrace to its lair on my very next journey to town.

I was rewarded. Taking the Metropolitan railway, I alighted at S. John's Wood Road station, and found myself confronted by S. John's Church.* Less than five minutes' walk to the left would have taken me, of course, to Lord's; but it wasn't the cricket season, so I skirted the outer rim of the dreary, leafless park—dreary and leafless as Wagner must first have seen it. Immediately after S. John's Church, crossing the park end of High Street and following Park Road towards the north, I came upon a brand-new set of flats flaunting the words "North Gate" in their derisive title, and then a hoarding—mockingly denoting demolition of old buildings for continuation of that row of upstart flats (I beg the tenants' pardon, but cannot forgive their landlord). On the space now enclosed by that hoarding must not twelve months ago have stood R. Wagner's lodgings; for beyond it comes a tongue, or junction of two streets which radiate from Park Road, just opposite the pedestrian "North" gate into the park, viz. Charlbert (late Charles) Street and Culworth Street, their point of junction constituted by a pair of late-Georgian houses facing toward the park—still bearing on their garden balustrade the long-sought symbol "Portland Terrace."

Nos. 34 and 35 are they, these sole survivors from lost Portland ranks; mere outposts, saved from extinction by their outposthood. But they are enough to tell us of the style of dwelling Wagner occupied; and quite a pleasant terrace it must once have been, in itself, to judge by these survivors. Nice cosy-looking houses, with a verandah embracing all the front of their half raised ground-floor, and ample room inside, so one would fancy, for the Erard grand we soon shall see installed in No. 22. The Terrace proper most probably was separated from Park Road itself by a strip of railed-in garden and a private thoroughfare; sitting therefore in comparative seclusion on his balcony, if ever he had a fine day, Wagner could almost picture himself in rural parts, as the look-out

* Praeger is historically correct in calling it "St John's Chapel"; it was so called, "and cemetery," in those days.

across the Regent's Canal to the park can scarcely then have been impeded by the belt of trees since grown to blocking height. But —O the mists, if nothing worse, from the marshy park and that sluggish canal! (I trust no local house-agent will read this malediction, or I may be hauled up for damages). And think of the fearful distance from civilisation to which his cicerone had banished the invader! It took myself a smart quarter of an hour's walk to get across the park to Upper Baker Street, and to Hanover Square would be fully twice as far. A cab-fare must be expended whenever Wagner wanted to go anywhere in particular; whilst even Praeger's modest home would be considerably over a brisk ten minutes' walk.* The amenities of Regent's Park were the only ones derivable from the position (to a sober married man at least), and those might just as easily have been obtained if Herr Glasenapp's conclusion had been right and Wagner housed at the south-eastern corner, within easy reach of Regent Street.

The name of Wagner's London landlady? There again I believe I can oblige. The P. O. directory for 1855, necessarily compiled ere the end of the previous year, assigns *no* occupant to No. 22, whereas that for 1854 mentions "William Henry Slater Esqre." For 1856, however, a "Mrs Henry" stands on record; so that we may imagine a respectable widow with a spick and span new-furnished house, for a set of rooms wherein she would charge her ground-floor lodger from two to four guineas a week, I should guess, according as it did or not include his 'board.'—

With this handful of real facts established amid our harmless guesses, we must now return to Praeger's open-mouthed amaze at Wagner's furnishing "desires"; and decidedly one doubts if P. had been brought up in Germany, when one notes his wonder at that terrible ur-folk institution, the over-bed, without which no patriotic Teuton can compose himself to sleep. For our part, we will countersign that ruinous piece of extravagance, together with the quaintly-named "easel," which we know was a personal fad of Wagner's; and after another extract from the said letter to Otto we shall have got him thoroughly equipped: "I have a splendid Erard grand in my rooms now. I had to have a standing-desk,

* See Wagner's undated "Conductor d'omnibus" note to Madame: "Croyez-vous le temps assez bon, pour entreprendre notre promenade? . . . Faites-moi une toute petite response si je dois venir vous chercher dans un Hansom, ou non?" (*Wagner as I knew him*, p. 257).

for writing at, expressly made for me by a carpenter; nowhere was such a thing to be had ready-made. So I am set up for work [scoring *Walküre*] since the last few days, but have only been able to make a poor beginning as yet." One is almost surprised not to find the Erard included in the list of reckless luxuries; but the reader's fears may be allayed: it was a complimentary loan. Wagner had asked Liszt mid-February, from Zurich, "Couldn't you give me a recommendation for the London Erard to place a good *grand* in my rooms?"—on the day of his first concert he renews the petition, "Do let me have that *letter to Erard* about the piano," also a day or two later, "I'm still without a piano. I am longing to resume my work." March 12, crossing these iterations, Liszt sends him a "letter to the firm of Erard, which is represented in London by Monsieur Bruzot"; three or four days later (letter 179), Wagner thanks him for the introduction to Bruzot, adds "I'm dying for a piano and my work," and clearly hurries off for it at once. But Praeger is too wrapped up in the quilt, to remember anything about selection of the piano—in which his services would not have been despised; so that we are deprived of a whole string of more or less appropriate comments,* and have to fall back on the Zurich letter to Liszt of next September, "I can't offer you such a glorious instrument as I had in London from Erard, for which I have forgotten to thank you as yet. If I could call an instrument like that my own, I believe I still should learn to play the piano."

One advantage of the locality chosen lay in the opportunity it afforded for Wagner's habitual stroll, and we find alike the sheep of Regent's Park and the tigers of the Zoological gardens appearing in his London letters to Otto. Of his well-known love of animals Praeger gives us a couple of instances in connection with these strolls: "Richard Wagner's intense attachment to the

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* P. managed to get into hot water over it, all the same. Reviewing his American effusions, the *M. Wd* of May 12, 55, observed that "He prefers also foreign pianos to English pianos—this man of Hamm. He praises Mr Lindsay Sloper, but says he 'only wished him one of Erard's pianos, as the one he played on, a Broadwood, lacked nothing so much as tone.'" Everybody knows that the distinctive excellence of the 'Broadwoods' of that period was precisely their "tone"; was 'Broadwood' to be "exiled," as the other Britons, by order of King Parallax?

canine species led him to make friends with our dog, a large, young, black Norwegian beast, given me by Hainberger, the companion of Wagner [?] in the forward movement of 1848-9, and sharer of his exile. The dog showed in return a decided affection for his newly made acquaintance. After a few days, when Wagner found that the dog was kept in a small back yard, he expostulated against such 'cruelty,' and proposed to take the dog's necessary out-door exercise under his own special care—a task he never shirked during the whole of his London stay. Whenever [?] he went for his daily promenade, a habit never relinquished at any period of his life, the dog was his companion, no matter who else might be of the party. Nor was the control of the dog an easy task. It was a curious sight to witness Wagner's patience in following the wild gyrations of the spirited animal, who, in his exultation of that semi-freedom, tugged at his chain, dragging the Nibelung composer hither and thither.—Part of Wagner's daily constitutional was to the Regent's Park, entering by the Hanover Gate. [Why—as the North gate was under his nose? Answer: because it makes him go to Praeger's first.] There, at the small bridge over the ornamental water, would he stand regularly and feed the ducks, having previously provided himself for the purpose with a number of French rolls—rolls ordered each day for the occasion. There was a swan, too, that came in for much of Wagner's affection. It was a regal bird, and fit, as the master said, to draw the chariot [!] of Lohengrin. The childlike happiness, full to overflowing, with which this innocent occupation filled Wagner, was an impressive sight never to be forgotten," and so on.

It is refreshing to be able to lend Praeger provisional credence for once. Wagner's first letter from Zurich, on his return, begins with "Best greetings from Switzerland!—You will already have had greetings consigned you by Lüders, I hope? * But from you I've heard nothing at all! At least you might have written me that you were glad to be rid of me and how sister Léonie [Mme P.] is faring; how Henri is doing; whether Gipsy [the dog] has been let loose at last; if the cat has still its nasty cough? Lord, what a number of things I absolutely need to

* Which shews that the letter dated "Paris, 28th June, 1855" (ten days before this one), was in reality addressed to Lüders in the first place, though it winds up "As I'm writing to all of you" (see 351-2 *inf.*).

know, to set my mind at rest!" These homely enquiries, or "mental links," have a pathetic sequel. Three days after, Richard and Minna have to bury their Peps, "the dear 13-year friend"; after another four days, Richard writes Ferdinand: "But what a remarkably strange coincidence it is, that has befallen us both! Listen.*—You know I was looking forward to an old and faithful little dog—my Peps. . . . So what has happened to you with your young dog, almost at the selfsame time, has moved me strongly. I had often thought of Gipsy, and wished I had taken him with me; and now that mettled creature, too, has suddenly died!—There's something terrible about it, is there not?—And—how we should be laughed at!!!—"

By no means so much credence can be accorded Praeger's so-called explanation in the following, the sequel of that "daily promenade" expansion: "His genuine affection for the brute creation, united to a keen power of observation, gave birth to numberless anecdotes, and the account of the Regent's Park peregrinations often formed a most pleasant subject of after-dinner conversation. I should explain that though Wagner had rooms in Portland Place [again!], St. John's Chapel, Regent's Park, he only took his breakfast there, and did such work in the matter of scoring in the morning, coming directly after to my house for his dog and rolls [were they unprocurable in Portland Town?], returning for dinner and to spend the rest of the day under my roof, where also a room was provided for him."—Really, Mr Praeger, this will not do! How can you expect us to believe that your foster-idol required another private room besides his lodgings?

* Still more remarkable is Praeger's treatment of this passage. In his English book he renders it fairly literally: "But how strange that the same incident should have happened to us both at about the same moment! You remember," etc.—where there is nothing to take exception to, beyond the small interpolation "at about the same moment," borrowed from considerably lower down. In his German he absolutely *substitutes* for Wagner's words the following: "That your beautiful dog should have met its death in Regent's Park through its wild rushing about, on the very day of my departure, appears to me as if a fatality. You know how I," etc. Similarly, after "Gypsy" he inserts "mein Regentsparkgefährte," which—taken in conjunction with the authentic words of the preceding letter, "Ob Gipsy endlich in die Welt getreten ist"—rather shakes our faith even in the harmless story of those "wild gyrations." If there were nothing else to prove how little we can trust him, this silly piece of tampering would suffice. It is a disease; there is no other word for it.

In this case an extremely large discount must be written off. No doubt Wagner "saw a good deal of Praeger, that amiable noodle"—as he writes to A. Roeckel from London—for P.'s was the only *domestic* interior to which he had access here; but nothing like this monopoly existed in fact. The London period happens to be peculiarly rich in long letters, which there is good reason to believe were mostly written of an evening: surely there was a desk or blotting-book at Portland Terrace! Then we shall presently find Klindworth dining at Wagner's rooms, with no other company; we shall find Sainton "countermanding my solitary house-dinner," and marching Wagner off to dine with *him;* and finally we have Praeger himself blandly reproducing a "short note from Wagner to my wife, with no other intention than showing the degree of close friendship that existed between him and us:—Ma très chère sœur Léonie: Si vous voulez je viendrai demain (Samedi) diner avec vous à 6 heures le soir. Pour Dimanche il m'a fallu accepter une invitation pour Camberwell, que je ne pouvais absolument pas refuser. Serez-vous contente de me voir demain?—Votre très obligé frère, Richard Wagner.—Vendredi soir, 1865." Of course the year-date (almost certainly an addition of the recipient's) is a misprint for 1855, corrected in the German; but the "Friday evening" upsets the bulk of Praeger's statement, since it shews that Wagner had not been to their house at all that afternoon, that he was not expected on the next, but proposed it as a substitute for Sunday, for which day he had already accepted a previous invitation elsewhere. In itself the whole thing is woefully small beer; but it proves how impossible it is to take the simplest assertion of this occasional host at its face value, more particularly when it involves the swelling of his own importance.

Praeger kept no diary—that is manifest—but in an odd corner of his book (pp. 75-6) he tells us: "Wagner had been but two days in London in 1855, when he took me off to Westminster. This was not his first visit to the national mausoleum; he had been there in 1839, and recollections of that occasion induced him at once to revisit the Abbey. We went specially to pay homage to the great men in Poet's Corner, Shakespeare's monument being the main attraction. . . . While contemplating the Shakespeare monument on his first visit, it seems he was led to a train of thought, the substance of which he related to me in

our 1855 visit. . . . In these reflections [nothing but the opening of *Op. and Dr.* part II.], referring to an antecedent period of sixteen years, I have often thought I could discern the germ of his daring revolution in musical form." Why or wherefore, no matter: the only really funny bit has already been given in vol. i. of this *Life* (p. 266). So we will try the other "mausoleum," with architecture for motto this time: "Of our visit to St. Paul's Cathedral I can recall but one observation of Wagner, to the effect that it was as cold and uninspiring as the Protestant creed — a strange remark from one whose own religious tendencies were Lutheran, and who could express his religious convictions so powerfully and poetically in his last work, 'Parsifal'"—in which but few of us can see much of the Protestant.

Let us get done with our sight-seeing *en bloc*, regretting the number of precious lesson-hours it must have cost the cicerone. "He said he would not do any work next day"—supposed to be after the second concert—"and arranged that we should visit the city. We went first to the Guildhall. It was astonishing how he absorbed everything to himself, to his purposes, how his fancy freely exercised itself. 'Herrjeh!' he cried, in true Saxon dialect, 'meine Riesen Fafner und Fasolt!'" (Here I have preferred the German version of the exclamation upon their "stumbling on the historic figures Gog and Magog.") Of course we have a jovial speculation as to "whether there was a 'Götterdämmerung' in store for the City Fathers, and whether Guildhall, their Walhalla, supported by the giants Gog and Magog, would also crumble away through the curse of gold"; which contrives a neat transition to the Mint, where, the customary "roll of cancelled bank notes, amounting to thousands of pounds sterling" having been placed in Wagner's hands, with a very modest estimate of future cost he "said, 'The hundredth part of this would build my theatre, and posterity would bless me'"—to be cancelled or not, as we please.

We have had enough of sight-seeing, and, as Wagner does not get lodged in the Tower, will reserve the trip to Greenwich for another chapter. Entertainments? Page 72 of *As I* says that "It is curious, but at no time do I remember Wagner speaking of having visited any of the London theatres in

1839,* whilst in 1855, when he was here for the second time, he went to almost every place of amusement then open, even those of third-rate order,"—a remark P. must have clean forgotten when he drove 173 pages ahead, and locked his promenader under the Milton Street roof for "the rest of" each day. With entertainments "of third-rate order" the profane might be disposed to class performances at Exeter Hall, but good Parallax probably meant nothing more serious than Music Halls—to which depressing exhibitions Lüders may have lured the stranger once or twice. Elsewhere we can find no evidence save of evenings at the two Philharmonics, at least one oratorio (letter to Otto, April 5), and *Fidelio*, possibly also *Il Trovatore* (new), at the Royal Italian Opera. At the establishment last named he would have the opportunity of hearing *Don Giovanni* twice, but no other classic work besides the three performances of *Fidelio;* the rest of the season, during his stay here, being devoted to Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini and Verdi, with one performance of the *Huguenots* (Grisi and Mario—repeated once after Wagner left London). For the English representations of *l'Etoile du Nord* at Drury Lane he just arrived in time, as they were given during the whole first half of March; but its production at the Royal Italian, as also the two performances of *Le Prophète*, took place a month after his departure. The only works of Shakespeare's which Wagner could have heard if he chose, were *Henry VIII.* at the Princess's (with Mrs Charles Kean and "a gorgeous and brilliant spectacle") and Phelps's May performances of *Othello* (alternating Iago with Creswick) and *King John* at the Surrey (a "third-rate" theatre?). At the Haymarket he might possibly have been tempted by Balfe's *Bohemian Girl*, with the Sims Reeves' and Weiss, the first week in May; but, except for the *Lady of Lyons* at the same house, there was nothing else whatever on the playbills of those months to offer a foreigner with so little knowledge of 'English as she is spoke' the very smallest attraction.

Let us pass to Wagner as P. knew him in the London streets—one trusts, not at the other end of Gipsy's chain: "He had not been here a day before his determined character was made strikingly apparent to me. In the matter of crossing a crowded

* An extremely safe remark, for the well-known *Autobiographic Sketch* of 1842 says: "not one of the theatres did I attend," namely in his London week of 1839.

thoroughfare his intrepidity bordered close upon the reckless. He would go straight across a road; safe on the other side, he was almost boyish in his laugh at the nervousness of others"—to which the German version adds the droll but not quite incredible item, that "he would generally also execute a pirouette while waiting for us." Moreover, he is said to have entered into a quarrel "once in the London streets with a grocer who had cruelly beaten his horse," a quarrel the details whereof are reserved for his compatriots: "He flew into such a rage that he seized the carman by the arm; the latter at once made ready to champion his rights with his fists, and it was not without some pains that this could be prevented." Then we have the great man's behaviour in Bond Street: "Should something pretty attract his attention in the street, say in a shop window, he would stop suddenly and exclaim aloud what he thought, heedless of the people standing by [*Wie*, "which often gathered a crowd of 'loafers' round us"]. Wagner was not wealthy when in London, yet he spent freely; silk for shirts for ordinary wear, and costly [?] Irish laces for Minna.* In these shopping expeditions my wife was his companion, and Wagner showed he possessed that kindly tact born of natural goodness of heart, in discovering what might be considered pretty, when it was straightway purchased and presented to her."

Indeed—"et sans la moindre offense pour Ferdinand"—it seems to have been Léonie Praeger that played the more intimate

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* On the journey back, "The inspection, which did not take place till Paris, went off all right: my lace was not observed," says Wagner; "The custom-house visiting only took place in Paris. It was well for me that the lace I had secreted for Minna was not discovered"—says *As*, though we have no authentic evidence of Wagner's calling his wife by her Christian name to his London friends. Similarly Minna herself, who never met Mme Praeger in her life, is made to call her "Léonie" in Wagner's next letter (July 7, 55): "Whilst I unpacked I chatted, and kept on chatting and unpacking. Several times she was deeply moved, particularly when we came to the carefully marked and neatly folded socks [should be "stockings"—*Strümpfe*]. Again and again she called out, 'What a good woman that Léonie must be!' and then when the needle-case came out and that beautiful thimble, both she and I were mightily pleased"—Praeger's English version. His German expands the exclamation into "Nein, die gute Frau Praeger, diese Léonie, von der Du mir so viel erzählst, muss ein Muster von einer ordnungsliebenden Hausfrau sein"—about four times the length of the *original*, "ach, muss das eine gute Frau sein!"

part in the Milton Street camaraderie. Congratulating Ferdinand on the birth of a son a fortnight after this Philharmonic season, Wagner says: "To me it is almost as if I had a share in the youngster; it was during the last 4 months of his mother's gestation that I entered your house as a new figure. The sympathy I sought was richly granted me, and maybe the child's mother was much concerned with the comical-sad man to whom, to his great delight, she was heartily attached." Again, September: "Greetings from my heart to your dear wife. I often think of her and her friendly interest in me with pleasure." Then in that witty epistle to herself of next November: "Mon écrit ne sera pas probablement mieux que ma conversation, qui était bien triste et bête. Mais néanmoins vous m'avez voué votre amitié, car vous savez lire entre les lignes de ma conversation. Soyez bien cordialement remercié pour ce bienfait."—Is it in this way, that Ferdinand came at length to some inkling of Wagner's sentiment towards Frau Wesendonck? We have heard Wagner drop the merest hint to Princess Wittgenstein a year ago (page 4*n*); a similar half-confidence imparted to the quick ear of Mme Praeger could scarcely long escape the natural transference from wife to husband, and when Ferdinand arrived at Zurich two years later there would not be the smallest difficulty in his putting two and two together, notwithstanding that the Wesendoncks had no recollection of ever meeting him. Certainly it is thus alone that I can account for the "strong restraint" which Mme Praeger said she was exercising over herself (*M. Std* 1894) when she inconsequently replied to my innocent compliment—"If she will forgive me for so doing, I would remind my readers that to *her* was paid by Wagner a tribute such as any woman might be proud of, namely: '*You* know how to read between the lines of my conversation'"—by a remark that I was angry with her husband for having "championed the wrong woman." Not for a moment do I believe that Léonie Praeger would have betrayed to the world any secret half-suggested to her by the disconsolate adorer of another—but she had a husband, among whose virtues the least conspicuous was discretion.—

We have drifted away from the milliner's, and as we began with the hatter, let us end our present "peregrinations" with the tailor ("a Pole who spoke German," is the secret confided exclusively to P.'s Teutonic readers): "We went together to a

fashionable tailor in Regent Street, where he ordered that his pockets and the back of his vest should be of silk, as also the lining of his frock-coat sleeves; for Wagner could not endure the touch of cotton, as it produced a shuddering sensation throughout the body that distressed him. I remember well the tailor's surprise and explanation that silk for the back of the vest and lining of the sleeves was not at all necessary, and that the richest people never had silk linings; besides, it was not seen. This last observation brought Wagner up to one of his indignant bursts, 'Never seen! yes; that's the tendency of this century; sham, sham, in everything; that which is not seen may be paltry and mean, provided only that the exterior be richly gilded.'—On the matter of dress he had, as on most things, decided opinions! The waistcoat he condemned as superfluous, and thought a garment akin to the mediæval doublet in every way more suitable and comely, and was strongly inclined at one time to revert to that style of costume himself." Luckily we are assured that this tradesman was "fashionable," or we might have confounded him with Praeger's earlier Paris tale of "some German tailor in a small way of business who, swayed by the blandishments of Minna, provided her with a suit of clothes for her husband for his birthday, 22nd May, 1840, agreeing to wait for payment until more favourable times." However, we may forgive P. his ignorance of the very old vogue of silk linings to what was probably the regulation evening-coat (*Frack*) for the sake of one rare flash of insight: "There was in Wagner a nervous excitability which not infrequently led to outbreaks of passion, which it would be difficult to understand or explain, were it not that there existed a positive physical cause. First, he suffered, as I have stated earlier, from occasional attacks of erysipelas; then his nervous system was delicate, sensitive,—nay, I should say, irritable. Spasmodic displays of temper were often the result, I firmly feel, of purely physical suffering. His skin was so sensitive that he wore silk next to the body"—the very best protective.

As *censor sumptuarius* Praeger is not always so mild. He might have ambitioned "silk next to the body" himself, but abhors tobacco, and therefore Wagner's use thereof is pose: "When singing, the more impassioned he became, the more frequent the snuff-taking. Now, this practice of Wagner's, one cultivated from early manhood, in my opinion pointedly illustrates

a phase [?] in the man's character. He did not care for snuff, and even allowed the indelicacy of the habit, but it was that insatiable nature of his that yearned for the enjoyment of all the 'supposed' luxuries of life. It was precisely the same with smoking. He indulged in this, to me, barbarous acquirement more moderately, but experienced not the slightest pleasure from it. I have seen him puffing from the mild and inoffensive cheroot, to the luxurious hookah—the latter, too, as he confessed [more funning?], only because it was an Oriental growth, and the luxury of Eastern people harmonized with his own fondness for unlimited profusion. 'Other people find pleasure in smoking; then why should not I?' This is, briefly, the only explanation Wagner ever offered in defence of the practice—a practice which he was fully aware increased the malignity of his terrible dyspepsia." The last three words are the only ones in the above that we can pass without a caution; for on the one hand, it is a fact now generally accepted by the medical world, that a moderate use of tobacco is rather an aid to adult digestion, and on the other we have heard Wagner himself exclaim in 1853 that his "torments are indescribable" on being temporarily docked of his snuff by doctor's orders, "an embargo to be appreciated only by such a passionate snuff-taker as I have been. I discover now that snuff was my sole enjoyment 'off and on': and that I have now to cut off!" (iv, 149).

To leave this Boswellculus in a less censorious mood for the nonce, we will bid Au revoir to him with his own rhapsodic preamble to Wagner's letter of next November to Madame:—"Picture this man, after a serious illness of some weeks, which must have been terribly irksome to a man of his active temperament, setting himself the task the first day of his convalescence to write in French and at such length. Instead of grumbling at the mental miseries such an illness must have caused him, through the interruption of that work so dear to him, he roused himself, in order to amuse by his boyish, humorous chat, 'his sister Léonie,' whom he knew was all sympathy for him. The boy's affectionate heart is plainly discernible in the man, tried and battered as he was by the world. It makes one think of the boy's gentle love for his 'little mother,' as he endearingly spoke of his mother. In him there were always glimpses of sunshine which would burst forth, aye, in the midst of the storms which,

caused by disappointment and ill-usage, raged within himself or round about him. It was impossible for those who knew Wagner not to love him, notwithstanding those defects of character which he possessed; they disappeared entirely in the love one bore him, and the worship his mighty genius compelled. The sun itself has spots, which, notwithstanding, do not prevent it from glittering with radiance. Why should not Wagner be allowed the privilege of the sun?"—in which must be included that of having satellites.

We will turn our attention awhile to less amusing, but personally more important and trustworthy members of Wagner's tiny London set.

Alas! they have little to say for themselves. The real friends, the true friends, have ever shrunk from aspiring to a special niche beside the great. Thus we have scant straw to bake our Wagner-London bricks to bear the stamp of Sainton-Lüders and Carl Klindworth.

"Wagner as Prosper Sainton knew him" would have been worth a hundred of the other product, but Sainton was not the man to put his signature to things he could not swear to. In his case, and still more so in that of Charles Lüders, sharer in his bachelor establishment, we should therefore have to content ourselves with those infinitesimal scraps of recollection already cited from the *Quarterly*, were it not for Wagner as he knew *them*. Twenty years after, when London at last had produced *Lohengrin*, Sainton wrote to Bayreuth; in the thick of business correspondence right and left anent the fast-approaching full rehearsals of the *Ring*, Wagner answers him in French, *tutoyant*: "You had no need to recall yourself to my memory. I have dictated to my wife my whole life. . . . Can you imagine that you do not figure in it? Diable! No. 8 Hind Street. And Lüders? The whole history of the pair of you is set down in that manuscript, from Helsingfors to Toulouse (en passant Hambourg). And London?—Charlemagne?* Where are your senses, my dear boy?—Well, well! Remind yourself soon that there still exists at Bayreuth (in Bavaria, not Syria!) a certain

* Glasenapp tells us this was Wagner's nickname for G. F. Anderson's better half, a despotic lady then nearer 70 than 60, pianoforte-mistress to Queen Victoria and her children.

chef d'orchestre of the old Philharmonic (pensioned?) Take your dear wife one fine day,* put Lüders on your shoulders, hire a good *cab* by the hour, and punctually arrive at Wahnfried; we dine at one (!!) and sup at seven.—And now, a truce to Lohengrins in London; ça m'a Costa—but bring your violin with you, if you will. The Nibelungen shall do the honours to you all" (June 4, 1875 †).

In the first letter to Praeger after return to Switzerland in '55 Wagner speaks of "the family Sainton Lüders, never to separate, I hope, and therefore regarded by me as one household. . . . I shall shortly write to Sainton also [Lüders had already been written to—see 134*n*]; for which I mean to scrape up all the French I learnt in London, to make him thoroughly understand what a splendid chap I think him!—And what is Lüders doing? I hear he headed the émeute in Hyde Park the other day; ‡ is that true?" In the next, "Remembrances also to my few London friends from the whole of my heart. Thanks to Lüders and

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* Born a fortnight after Wagner, in 1860 Sainton married Miss Dolby, who had sung at Wagner's last Philharmonic concert.

† Together with that of Dec. '55, this letter first appeared in the *Quarterly* of July 1888, whence the pair was borrowed by the *Mus. World* of the 28th of that month. A few sentences of the earlier letter, not to be found in either of those reproductions, I derive from personal inspection of the autograph; cf. 49 *sup.*

‡ Praeger's footnote to his translation of this passage is of some interest: "This is Wagner's characteristic jocularity, Lüders being a man of short and slight stature and most mild in temper." It would have been of wider interest had he told us *what* the Hyde Park riot was about; at any rate it would have saved myself some pains (would it, though? On second thoughts, it might have increased them). However, the *Times* of July 2, 55, has a leader on this affair, which appears to have been a fracas of extensive scale, if tame enough of origin; said origin being what the *Times* describes as the "Sabbatarian tomfoolery" of Lord R. Grosvenor, who had lately introduced a Bill "for the better observance of the Sabbath." There had been a similar disturbance the previous Sunday, but of nothing like the dimensions of that on July 1, when "a vast multitude" assembled, "wellnigh every man [whereof] had a decent coat upon his back," and "The people hooted and groaned at every carriage which passed along the drive near the Serpentine, and exhorted the occupants to 'go to church.'" Six hundred police lay ambushed in Hyde Park, so the *Times* says, and drove a number of the demonstrators into the water, whence they were rescued by boats manned also with police. The main idea of the Bill, as one gathers from *Punch*, was rigorous Sunday Closing of public-houses etc.

Sainton for their friendly letter"; and the next after that, "A good strong dose of greetings to the poor hypochondriac, Lüders: good Lord, if things had followed suit to that dear fellow, how well I ought to have felt in London! When he caught fire at times, he was quite enchanting.—I shall write Sainton soon, [that?] the lucky musicianer (*Musikant*) always comes off the best!" And once again to Praeger (March '56)—last of the verifiable letters in his book prior to 1865—"The fire disaster [Covent Garden theatre] left me rather cold at first, till it began to prick at me for Sainton's sake. Now I hear, however, that Gye will be able to arrange his Opera after all; so Sainton's revenue, no doubt, is safe—and my grief assuaged. That he should be playing under Wylde now, amuses me much; how absurd that he should have had to leave the old Philharmonic! So Costa has succeeded in everything!"*

But the best testimony to Wagner's affection for the "familie Sainton Lüders" is furnished by his long letter of Dec. 19, 1855, extracts from which I append:

"Dear Prospère—It is only to-day that I have left the invalid's bed I had kept for two months with exception of a few odd days. I expect it was the London sickness, long concealed, that came to a head at last to remind me of what I owe to you (*toi*) and all your friendly care, without which I should probably have found my death there—whence I brought back nothing, as it is, beyond a fine collection of latent rheums and catarrhs which now have escaped from their cage. The fumes of London having finally fled from body alike and mind, my first occupation is to rake up all the French I can still discover in those corners of my poor brain where our linguistic faculties are born—according to the doctrine of professor Praeger of Hamm †; for I really am bursting to tell you I'm as fond of you as ever, and one of my sweetest memories is your acquaintance and your friendship. You will believe me?"—Here follows the passage about Costa and Anderson, part of which I quoted cap. II.—"Behold you now, paid out as you deserved! And what have you gained in exchange for

* Again a caveat must be lodged (cf. 49 *sup.*). Sainton was Costa's right hand at the Opera and Sacred Harmonic still, and if he left the Philharmonic *through* C., it can only have been in pursuance of C.'s mysterious quarrel with that body. We must remember, however, Wagner is simply replying to Milton Street gossip.

† Dr Hueffer's reproduction (*Quarterly*) omits the "of Hamm," but this touch has its significance: evidently Davison's little joke was relished at Hinde Street.

what you've lost? Hélas, a sorry gift: my friendship and the recollection of a melancholy man, very often insupportable, who ate your dinners and assailed your better humour with his shocking French! Behold your recompense! . . . The only thing to console me a little is the lesson you have received never to concern yourself, so far as art goes, except with people of a very different mould from mine. . . . Indeed I do assure you, I have a very keen desire for news from you; but long news—very long, do you hear? Or have you a grudge against me, now you have learnt that my acquaintance has brought you trouble? I don't believe it, for I know that—first and foremost—you are *excellent garçon, cœur généreux*. . . . Let us maintain our friendship, which to me is like an unexpected smile of destiny. Let us hope to meet again some day, and continue what has but commenced."—The conclusion sounds much prettier in its original French: "Adieu, mon très cher Prospère! Mille saluts à Lüders et à la maison Praeger, mes parents! Je te remercie encore de tout mon cœur pour tant de bien, dont tu m'as comblé, et suis persuadé de ce que je n'en perdrai jamais le souvenir.—Ton tout dévoué frère et ami, RICHARD WAGNER."

Compare that with the warmest of the letters to Ferdinand, and you see at once the difference of footing. Wagner's "unexpected smile of destiny" was the friendship of Prosper Sainton, and it is clear from the above that these two men were wellnigh inseparable in London—a final dissipation of the foolish fable of "a room provided" under Praeger's roof. At Milton Street, admitted, Wagner was a frequent visitor: Hinde Street was virtually his London home. Thus Otto is told (March 20), "Your cigar-case is regularly filled by Sainton for me now with choicest brands"; thus shall we find Wagner the only other guest at the Sainton-Lüders table when Berlioz spends the evening there; and thus we find Wagner writing Liszt mid-May: "Poor Klindworth has been very ill all along, and I have been deprived of a great enlivenment through the impossibility of undertaking anything with him; he is somewhat better now, but may not go for walks with me as yet. Apart from him, my whole society is limited to Sainton, the first violin (who also was the cause of my hapless engagement), and a certain Lüders who lives with him; both are ardently devoted to me, and do their best to make my stay agreeable. Beyond that, I also often go to Präger, a good soul. Latterly a Mr Ellerton, a rich amateur, has attached himself to me quite heartily; he had heard my operas in Germany, and hung my portrait up at home two years ago. He is the first

Englishman who does not set much store by Mendelssohn; a charming man, of subtle brain."—

Of absolutely no other Englishman do we hear, beyond the Philharmonic members, as coming within the range of Wagner's ken in all these four long months; of this solitary Englishman we only hear this once, and—if it be not deemed a 'bull'—he wasn't an Englishman at all, but "a descendant from an ancient Irish family" (*Grove*). Naturally, the Celt was quicker to detect a foreign genius, than the self-centred Anglo-Saxon. John Lodge Ellerton is the full name of this rara avis; born 1807, he wrote quite a huge number of works in "nearly every species of composition," and died at the age of sixty-six, four years too soon to welcome Wagner once again; God rest his ashes! Had Wagner made his acquaintance two months previously, things might have gone somewhat better; in May it was too late to stem the tide.

And now for Klindworth, the remaining point of what we may term, perhaps, the isosceles triangle described by Wagner's London intercourse: Praeger (at the acutest angle, double the distance of the other two), Sainton-Lüders, Klindworth, all apparently disjunct till Wagner turned them into parts of a geometric figure, which seems to have lost its continuity with his departure. "I am also very pleased with a young musician, Klindworth, introduced to me by Liszt"—says Wagner to Otto in that March letter from London, with never a word about poor Parallax—"If the fellow had only a tenor voice, I should bear him off without conditions; for he otherwise has everything for Siegfried, and especially the whole exterior."

Of Carl Klindworth (still living—near Berlin) the late E. Dannreuther wrote in *Grove* (1880): "One of the best of living musicians and pianists, whose reputation is sure to last, though it was slow to rise, [he] was born at Hanover on Sept. 25, 1830. In early youth he was an accomplished performer on the violin. From his 17th to his 19th year he acted as conductor to a travelling opera troupe; then he settled in Hanover and took to playing the piano and composing. In 1850 [?] he went to Weimar to study pianoforte-playing under Liszt, and had Hans von Bülow, W. Mason, and Dionys Pruckner as his fellow-pupils. In 1854 he came to London, where he remained fourteen years, appearing in public at intervals as a pianist and conductor of orchestral

concerts, but in the main living the quiet life of a student and teacher. . . . Foremost among the mass of good work done by Klindworth stand his pianoforte scores of Wagner's 'Der Ring des Nibelungen,' and his critical edition of Chopin; the latter beyond all praise for rare insight into the text and minute care bestowed on the presentation of it; the former quite wonderful for the fidelity with which the transcript is contrived to reflect Wagner's complicated orchestration."

In 1898 Dr Klindworth—who left us in 1868, to take up the post of professor of the pfte at the Moscow conservatoire, which he held for fifteen years, thereafter becoming conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic—revisited London at the time of the first cyclic presentation of the RING at Covent Garden on some approach to 'Bayreuth lines.' Naturally this revived old memories in startling contrast, and to the penultimate number of the *Bayreuther Blätter* for that year he contributed an article entitled "Einst und Jetzt in England," parts whereof I press into the service of this chapter and the next. "Since my departure from London in 1868"—he says—"I had not been there again except for a few days in 1884," when he conducted a charity-concert; whilst in 1898 he came in for an ovation at St James's Hall with his rendering of Wagner's *Faust* overture, Liszt's *Orpheus*, and Berlioz' *Cellini* overture. "No Mr Davison, no Mr Chorley, spoil the pleasing memory of that night; for the press itself, without exception, speaks gratefully of the endeavour and achievements of my life, and reflects the good will that greeted me in England as the master's friend." In the fifties it was otherwise:—

After completing my studies with Liszt at Weimar, when I entered the British metropolis in the spring of 1854 full of naive youthful hope, but almost bare of means, how little did I anticipate the bitter struggle that lay before me in a world so altogether foreign to my aspirations and ideals. My eyes were to be opened surprisingly quick. A whole bundle of the most promising letters of introduction to families of high and highest rank, to celebrated personages, did I despatch to their destination: they remained without the least result. My début [March 29] with a Beethoven sonata [op. 2 in C.] and Liszt's Midsummer Night's Dream fantasia, at one of the Musical Evenings of Mr J. Ella, drew down upon me and my master the first outburst of wrath from the then mighty critic of the *Times*, Mr J. W. Davison. In

the *Musical World* he wrote: 'Herr Klindworth is evidently young, and at present his talent does not look very promising. He exhibits the faults of his master with none of his beauties. He thumps the instrument with right good will, and is by no means exact in his execution. His mechanism, indeed, is very defective; and this was even more clearly shown (less clearly, if you please) in the *fantasia* of Liszt, which is one of the most difficult, and at the same time one of the most incoherent and unmeaning *bravura* pieces to which we ever listened. Liszt must have had some spite against Mendelssohn when he wrote it. There should be some heavy tax upon these *fantasia*-makers, to prevent them from mangling and caricaturing the works of great masters,' etc.—That attack did not fail to harm me, and want ere long was added to my mortifications and rejections. Good friends, indeed, helped me as far as they could; but I felt very unhappy and forlorn, saw no possibility of improving my unfortunate plight by profitable employment, and to make matters worse, I fell seriously ill with the approach of spring 1855.

Meanwhile Liszt had written Wagner toward the end of January (cf. cap. I.): "You will allow me, no doubt, to send Klindworth a couple of lines for you"; to which Wagner gladly assented. Liszt accordingly sends to Klindworth, as I take it, the following brief note of introduction dated Feb. 16: "With these lines, most incomparable friend, I present to you Carl Klindworth, about whom I have already said something to you by word of mouth and letter. You will find in him an excellent musician and pianist, who is heartily devoted to you and has not passed a couple of years in vain with me at Weymar. He has established himself in London since a year ago, where I cordially commend him to your protection." Apparently Klindworth was meant to bring the note himself to Wagner, but the poor young man lay ill in bed; so, his address having been hunted up by no matter whom, "One day [early in March] my room door opened and in came—RICHARD WAGNER—: 'So there you lie, poor fellow, and I'm obliged to come to you instead of your welcoming me! Liszt wrote me about you, and I'm delighted to make your acquaintance.' That was the second decisive turning-point in my life (the first was in 1851, when I came to know Liszt and was admitted as his pupil), for ever since that day the influence of Richard Wagner has determined my mental development and the events of my life are closely knit with his. He introduced me to the very small circle of his London friends. Sainton the admirable

violinist and Lüders, his Pylades, belonged to it. To Sainton we owed Wagner's engagement. Won by Lüders' enthusiasm, he had moved Mr Anderson (most influential of the directors of the Old Philharmonic Society then) to propose Wagner to the committee * when Costa, thitherto conductor of their concerts, had taken leave of them; and without having ever seen the master, he boldly pledged himself as witness of Wagner's eminent capacity as conductor. Sainton told us afterwards how alarmed he had been lest his ruse should be found out, and with what nervous suspense he followed the first rehearsal to see if Wagner really was of any good.—Further, I must mention Ferdinand Praeger as belonging to the circle" (p. 121 *sup.*).

It must have been during his own first week in London that Wagner made the derelict's acquaintance, as he tells Liszt directly after his first concert: "Klindworth, for whom I thank you much, will write you all about my London début." Three weeks later: "No doubt Klindworth will have written you by now; at least, he was horrified the other day, when I gave him your reminder. He has been ill; moreover he's doing badly here: but how am I to help him? Rapscallionry, hard-headedness and sacrosanct stupidity, are hedged with walls of steel here; none but a rascal or Jew [de Meyer?] can succeed." Evidently Klindworth does write Liszt ere long, expressing his sense of gratitude to Wagner; since the latter is thanked by Liszt, May 2, for being "so friendly and kind to Klindworth." Apart from friendly sympathy, there were very few ways in which the newcomer could help the all but newcomer in hostile London; but those few ways he certainly essayed. First there was Praeger, to whom of course he introduced him (not *vice versâ*), and whose public pen he seems to have inspired in Klindworth's behalf. Would that it had been verbal inspiration!—for Parallax did not help matters much, if we may go by the *Musical World* of May 26 on his then latest news-letter to that New York paper:—

The *Musical World* is again reviled, as a matter of course. It is now a pianist, Herr Klindworth, whose light we are endeavouring to hide under a bushel:—"The ridiculous spite which exists against Liszt, as the leader of the so-called new school [with which P. had "no patience" in '54—W. A. E.], has as yet been a bar against Klindworth's

* A tiny variant of Sainton's own account (see pp. 46 and 164); probably Dr Klindworth has forgotten that S. was himself a director that year.

performing at either of the Philharmonics. The editor of the *Musical World* raves against Liszt and his pupils, and the directors fear that editor's rage, although they become every day more convinced of the striking successes of Klindworth's performances, and that he is, as we stated before,* the greatest pianist now in England."—It is hard to unravel such a jumble of disconnected assertions, yet all contradicting each other. Herr Klindworth *performs nowhere*, because directors fear the "rage" of an editor; and yet directors become every day more convinced of "the striking successes of *his performances*"! It is very unfair of Dr Wylde, Messrs Anderson & Co., if this be true. Let them rest assured that we shall not be enraged against them for bringing forward at their concerts the "first pianist now in England"—but the contrary. We heard Herr Klindworth once (at Mr Ella's Musical Winter Evenings). He played Beethoven's Sonata in C (Op. 2) in a style not much to our liking, and an incoherent *fantasia* by his master, which was not at all to our liking. We stated so at the time, but shall be glad to mend our criticism at a second hearing. Nevertheless, we repose but small faith in the spasmodic eulogies of Professor Drei Sterner Plaudereien Praeger of Hamm. . . .

It would have done Klindworth a better turn, if Wagner had implored Drei Sterner to *abuse* him in that New York paper; but even from the quoted "jumble" we may gather that Wagner had already been trying to induce his own Old Philharmonic to give this pianist a chance. At last he succeeded with its rival, for he writes Liszt from Zurich July 5: "Yesterday Klindworth played a concerto of Henselt's at the last concert of the New Philharmonic (conducted by Berlioz); I had made the acquaintance of Dr Wylde—a good fellow—and on this small point alone was I able to be of use to Klindworth. For that matter, I'm very sorry for K.; he's much too much of an artist and gentleman, not to remain very unlucky in London. He ought to try something else!" This New Philh. appearance, however, was Klindworth's first real step on the ladder, and, allowance made for editorial infallibility, he might have been fairly content with the "mending" of Davison's criticism displayed in the *M. World* of July 7: "The pianoforte concerto of M. Henselt is the most incoherent thing we ever heard from the pen of that clever composer of bagatelles. It is nothing but an unmeaning *pasticcio* of *traits de*

* Probably "as we stated before" is an addition by the New York editor, brother of Klindworth's fellow-pupil W. Mason (see Liszt to the latter, Dec. '54).

bravoure. M. Klindworth has enormous execution, and mastered the octave passages with astonishing rapidity and success. His playing, however, wants charm and repose; and his general style is heavy. He was much applauded at the end; but we do not care if we *never* hear the concerto again."

On the same day as that critique appeared, Wagner writes Praeger, among other things, that one of his three medallion portraits (the other 2 for Milton and Hinde Streets) is to be given to "the poor devil of Manchester Street no. 9, known as Klindworth with the injury (*mit dem Schaden*). I'm expecting a report from him soon on the result of his concert-playing last Wednesday, and hope he's at Richmond by now, catching the water-complaint.* I shall write him as soon as I know exactly where a letter will find him. For to-day give my heartiest greetings to the poor brave, affectionate fellow, and bid him good cheer in my name!" That is followed on the 15th by another message, "Do ask Klindworth to write and let me know his—perhaps altered—address," the last two-thirds being omitted in P.'s reproduction. Judging by Wagner's letter of nearly seven weeks later to Klindworth himself, one almost doubts that these messages were ever conveyed to him; but ere coming to that, I will complete the Milton-street triptych: "Vive Lüders . . ! Vive Ferdinand . . ! Vive Sainton qui venait tard, mais qui venait! Vive Klindworth qui ne mangeait et ne buvait pas, mais qui assistait. Vive, vive Léonie, qui riait de compassion de notre hilarité! Cela n'était pas si mal!"—writes Wagner in that November letter to Mme Praeger, recalling an extempore feast of "the circle."

Summing up his brief account of Wagner's Philharmonic season, says Dr Klindworth:—"The powerful stimulus, which London might have received from Wagner, did not come off; ignorance and poltroonery gave it no opportunity. What he did, met no heed; we dared not hope for his return—the master left the

* A cross between dropsy and boating—"und schafft sich die Wassersucht an." Praeger, into whose head it must have been rather hard to drive a joke in any language, renders it "enjoying the benefit of hydropathy"; whilst his German reduces the whole message to "und das dritte für den armen kranken Klindworth, von dem ich hoffe zu erfahren, dass er bereits in der Wasserkur in Richmond ist"—not a syllable more. The English having already robbed K. of any representant of the epithets "braven, liebenswürdigen," P. thus is consistent in his thrusting of everyone but himself and family more and more nto the background.

shores of England in deep dejection. The letter I received in September 1855 may contribute to complete the picture of his London sojourn :—

Zurich, 31. Aug. 55.

I see, dear Klindworth, I'm to get no news of you unless I threaten you ; and even then it may be a question if there will be any result. The plight in which I left yourself was really critical enough [for you] to credit me with some small interest in its upshot. The chief thing that concerned me when I left London, was your health ; yet, in spite of my reminder through Präger, I have been able to learn nothing as to how you're going on. Are you so glad, already, to be rid of me?—

I read about your appearance at the N. Ph., and it seems to have gone quite well ; at least your aim has been accomplished, to recall yourself to the public's memory. Taking all together, there surely can be no doubt you will '*come to the front*' in London ; the worst of it is, we have to cherish such a poor opinion of that front itself. For my own part, I wouldn't give a Thank-you for any sort of London glory. You can hardly believe what a punishment it has been to me, to have accepted that idiotic invitation. It filched a whole half-year from my life, and even now I scarce can find my feet, after that wicked shifting of my equilibrium. My works have suffered for it most ; even to-day I have hardly got much farther than the fair-copying of what of the Walküre was finished already in London. . . . Lord knows, in London I lost all memory for my compositions ! . . .

At last I'm gradually coming to myself, I hope ; I only wish you could do so, too—that is to say, come over to me ! Indeed I've passed the most enjoyable of hours with you in that odious den, and it is with great delight I think of you, your noble views and brilliant aptitudes. So please get married quickly to a pretty girl, of course a rich one, and then make off to Switzerland, where one can pull along fairly well in such circumstances. But the first step toward it is your thorough convalescence ; I hope for good news of that soon. . . . Good Lord, what I feel when I think of Manchester Square and my melancholy roamings to and fro between the few familiar streets.* Hearty greetings from Your R. W."

Of occasional visits to a German house at Camberwell, friends of Wesendonck, we shall hear in our London chronicle ; but with Klindworth, most solid and enduring of the master's acquisitions

* Sainton-Lüders then lodged in a comfortable three-windowed house, still existing, forming the only link between the Square itself and the present Mandeville Place. The house in which poor Klindworth once lodged is by no means so flourishing of outward aspect. Less than 5 minutes' walk from Hinde Street, Manchester Street also leads into the Square, at right angles to the former.

here, ends the lists of those "friends left behind me" of whom he tells Praeger next Spring that they "luckily are my only memory of London now." Glasenapp, indeed, speaks of one German friend Wagner did not leave behind, but got transferred to Zurich in the autumn—his fellow-sufferer from Dresden, the great architect Semper (cf. iii, 35); of the London meetings of these two, however, we have no particulars at present (Praeger is silent on the point—not that that is any criterion). Then, we shall meet with Malwida von Meysenbug, the Idéaliste, just once ourselves. Except for casuals, that exhausts the catalogue.

So let me close this more or less private chapter with Wagner's private estimate of our nation, subject to the very necessary caution that he himself could not "speak English" and it was Praeger who not only mis-*knew him*, but also had "taught him to know the Herrn Engländer." This sweeping estimate, in which allowance must further be made for personal soreness, forms part of a very long letter to friend Sulzer of Zurich: *—

Really I could wish you a longish stay in England for once, and should be curious to hear your judgment on the things of this world then. That my artistic temperament feels exactly as in hell here, may count for nothing; but I should like to learn how your respect for "public opinion" would reconcile itself in time. There is something so peculiar about direct inspection, even if one can't precisely peep into the crevices of the secret cabinet: the general physiognomy of the race has always something very tell-tale in itself. What surprises me, is to find the unbounded hollowness, mindlessness and narrow-heartedness of all public and private relations here always treated as a mere matter of course. When one learns the open secrets of this parliamentary system (more especially with its elections and party bids), and hears that nobody even remotely imagines the Government to lay State affairs at all to heart, but with the most frivolous indifference to move along a worn routine which has the advantage of keeping themselves and their personal interests in credit, and doesn't stop them from having the sleekest and smuggest appearance even in their seventieth or eightieth year—one is astonished indeed, but not exactly filled with admiration.—Moreover, an ominous

* Except for a "business" commencement, it is given at full length in Herr Steiner's *Neujahrsblatt* for 1903. As he calls it the "first extensive [London] letter to Sulzer," but gives no date (apparently it bore none), we may assign it to somewhere about April. I shall have to draw on it, again, for chapter V.

epoch seems to have arrived at last for England and its lofty statesmanship: what one hears, points to a downfall presaged by those classes of the people un-enfranchised yet, and a downfall bound—as one hears aloud e.g. on the railway—to lead to an entire revolution. I cannot ascertain what is in it; to tell the truth, I've become deuced indifferent to all politics, and look for nothing from either continuance or overthrow.

Those were the days of the Crimean War and Lord Palmerston—become Prime Minister a month ere Wagner's landing—but we were really not in half so parlous a state as all that, whatever the unnamed railway-passenger (Malwida, or E. Roeckel?) may have overheard. It is out of the question that Wagner himself could have studied the English papers;* apparently our usual native growls of self-depreciation were retailed to him in the garish colouring of that New York *Musical Gazette* or the later London pasquinade in the *Neue Zeitschrift*, and naturally they sounded startling to the ears of one so long accustomed to the simpler tones of Switzerland. Nor must the reader accuse me of running one sentence to death. In his dedication of *As* to an English peer, says Praeger: "In this country, where I have now lived for an unbroken period of fifty-one years, I was Wagner's first and sole champion, and, notwithstanding all the calumny with which he was persistently assailed (which even now has not entirely ceased), stood firmly by him." Over fifty years our guest, yet in

* What the particular national grievance may have been, so magnified by the travelling foreigner, I leave the political historian to trace (haply that Sunday Closing Bill); but there can be no doubt that the German Prince Consort was by no means popular at the time.—As to the general question of Dreisterner *v.* the English, take this tidbit rescued by the *M. Wd* (May 12, 55) from its *M. Gazette* obscurity: "No doubt, when one names the orchestra of Queen Victoria at her palace, you, gentle reader, might imagine something like a good, and even choice band. But alas! excepting three or four good performers, there is no street-band that does not furnish better musicians. Their performances (after dinner) are truly ridiculous. The salaries of these royal musicians form, just now, the theme of anxious inquiry, as it seems that they are anything but royal, and public doubts are expressed of her Majesty's knowing where the money allowed for the orchestra goes to." With an ingeniousness all his own, he manages to tell the Americans something derogatory about the Queen, Mr Anderson, and A.'s English subordinates, all in one breath: a masterpiece of bad taste, which must have thoroughly disgusted Sainton (who had just resigned). Davison's comment merits immortality: "So the Hamm Professor dines at the Royal table—eh?"

the whole book he has not one unqualified good word to say for us! That this was his peculiarity in the fifties also, I have already shewn by an extract or two, and there certainly is a great amount of justice in what Davison remarked of him apropos of his sneers at the products of Lucas and Onslow: "After all, England well deserves the contempt lavished upon her by the swarms of mediocre foreigners, chiefly German music masters and Italian singing masters, whom she fosters to her own prejudice, and who, veritable locusts, eat up everything that is to be found, poisoning the atmosphere in return for the food and nourishment they receive, with villainous odors, in the shape of compositions that subvert good taste and lay the seeds of musical disease and ruin. The same kind of clique of small Germans infests New York and Boston. . . . The case is scarcely worse here, in England, than it promises to be there, in the States. . . . See how this foreigner, this Drei-Sterner Haudegen (late Plauderein), this Hammy Professor, whenever he has a chance, administers a sly kick to whatever emanates from a native of that soil which has received him with such hospitality, permitting him to gain an honourable livelihood. . . . It is not Sims Reeves, an English singer, nor the Academy, an English seminary, alone that our 'Haudegen' endeavours to lower in general estimation, but *everything* English, no matter what" (*M. Wd* June 23, 55).

To say that P. drew odium upon himself by "championing" Wagner, is to put the cart before the horse. Far rather was it his sudden screeching patronage that helped to make things difficult for Wagner here, just as it would have made them difficult for Spohr or Weber. For Davison at least was not of those who would exclude real foreign talent, though he may not always have been a good judge of it. Only five weeks later, he returns to the point: "We remember a great fuss being made, some years ago, about the appointment of M. Sainton as leader—one of the few steps for which Messrs Anderson and tail deserved credit. This came out of the 'native talent' cry, which simply embodies a dangerous sophism, and offers a sop to the Cerberus of common-place. 'Help yourself or nobody will help you,' is a wholesome maxim, the neglect of which has had no small share in the undignified position which, as a class, our own musicians maintain in the face of Europe. We learn from foreigners, *steal* from foreigners [see copyright question, cap. IV.], and in return abuse

them and lay plans to get rid of them. We are not alluding to the 'locusts' of whom we spoke some time ago—the small and ravenous 'fry,' that swim across the Channel like the Danes and other fishy barbarians of the early ages, burdening the land with a veritable glut of mediocrity and common-place—but to foreigners who are really distinguished for their ability, among whom such a professor as M. Sainton is justly entitled to rank. M. Sainton has as much a right to make his way in England, as Mr John Field made his way in St Petersburg, or Mr Balfe in Vienna, and as Mr Sterndale Bennett can make his way, if he pleases, in any part of the Continent. . . . We hate the encroachments of incapable foreigners; but we have no sympathy for equally incapable Britons. Our patriotism stops suddenly short at that point."

Did I not say it would have been a blessing to everyone, if Papa Roeckel had forgotten somebody's address? Then Wagner might have had a better chance, not only of being valued at his genuine worth, but also of learning something of our country. As it was, he might as well have been shut up in Bloomsbury or Soho; in Bloomsbury, for that matter, he would have been next door to one of our grandest institutions, the British Museum—a glimpse of which his ubiquitous cicerone does not vouchsafe us. What a charity it would have been, to take him to the Boat-race, Derby, or a cricket-match at his neighbouring Lord's: yet we never hear that he was even treated to the milder dissipations of the newly-opened Crystal Palace—where at least he would have found our English sense of justice redressing the tyranny exerted by one of his musical compatriots on another. For it was only a few weeks after Wagner's departure that August Manns, "the martyr to whose case we drew attention some twelve months ago" (*M. Wd* Oct. 55), was appointed to the direction and for the reformation of the Crystal Palace band—so soon to commence its good work of educating our insular taste, and eventually to gain a knighthood for its master.

Indeed we are neither so ungrateful, nor so deaf, if we are only allowed a fair hearing. But when Davison and Chorley were banging their pair of big drums, it was simply adding to the din for Parallax to try to drown them with his penny whistle.

IV.

PHILHARMONIC DÉBUT.

London music in the 'fifties. Wagner's predecessor at the Philharmonic; condition of the band. First rehearsal.—Hanover Square rooms and audience.—First concert. Criticisms: Morning Post, Daily News, Times, "*Dreisterner's*," Musical World ("*Judaism*" *cry caught up*), Athenæum, Sunday Times (*H. Smart*), *Mendelssohnians'*, N. Zeitschrift's, *Wagner's own.—A supper-party.* Faust-*overture disposed of. English copywrong. Camberwell hosts. Life-sketch by Davison.—Rehearsing second concert; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and excerpts from* Lohengrin. *Divers criticisms thereon, and further mischief by* "*Dreisterner.*"*—Muzzling the* Times (?)—Punch's '*joke*' *and its sequel.*

> *Once more I'm in the ever-juvenile condition of a débutant. After playing this rôle a tidy length in Germany, I had to go through the same thing at Zurich . . . I shall always remain the beginner who first has to make himself known . . . age, with its fruits, absolutely declines to set in.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

IT WAS by no means a musical desert, Wagner had strayed into; "What with the two Philharmonic Societies, the three monster gatherings at Exeter Hall,* Mr Hullah's singing-schools, and no end of Cecilian, Seraphic and Apollonic, and other small fry scattered over the metropolis, London may be considered to be pretty well supplied"—says the *M. World* October 1854. But the general quality of execution does not appear to have kept step with the quantity, if we may accept that journal's estimate of the year's achievements (Dec. 30, '54): "A few incidents excepted, the past season has been unusually dull and uninteresting. Every branch of music seemed to conspire, as it were, to render the

* Sacred Harmonic — Costa; London Sacred Harmonic—Surman; Harmonic union (veering from oratorio to symphony)—Julius Benedict.

year of our Lord 1854 immemorable in the art. The two Philharmonic Societies remained almost at a standstill. The elder was satisfied with its ancient *prestige*, and made no move forward. The younger showed an inclination to advance, but was retarded by a lack of energy and self-reliance. The production of Bach's *Grosse Passions-Musik* was a step in the right direction, but the attempt to pass off the overture to *Tannhäuser* on the subscribers, even as a novelty, was a retrogression.* The Sacred Harmonic Societies were content to abide by their old *répertoires*. The performance of Beethoven's Mass in D, by the former society, however, constituted an honourable exception. The introduction of this extraordinary work to the English public created a marked sensation, and provoked an endless controversy. The Mass in D was not eminently successful. The audiences of Exeter-hall did not seem to understand it; and, after two or three performances, it was wisely withdrawn. The Musical Union [J. Ella—chamber-music] proved as exclusive as ever, and the Quartet Association [Sainton, Cooper, Hill and Piatti] displayed hardly as much spirit as in the former season. The Harmonic Union evidenced unmistakeable symptoms of a general decay. At St Martin's Hall, by means of cheap prices—the only 'open sesame' to Fortune's cave, nowadays—and his own untiring exertions, Mr Hullah was making progress with the public gradually but surely. Those, by the way, who desire to ensure success, should follow the example of M. Jullien and Mr Hullah. Let them look to cheap prices. But this by the way! In the concert rooms matters were still more flat and unprofitable.

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* Six weeks after the *Tannhäuser* overture, Schumann had met a like fate: "The only novelty was Herr Schumann's symphony in B flat"—says the *M. Wd*, of an Old Philh. concert—"which made a dead failure, and deserved it. Few of the ancient 'Society of British Musicians'' symphonies were more incoherent and thoroughly uninteresting than this. If such music is all that Germany can send us of new, we should feel grateful to Messrs Ewer & Wessel if they would desist from importing it. The performance was spirited, but coarse and unfinished." Neither could our Praeger away with it in his Rotterdam news-letter (see cap. II.): "Having listened for some time to the enthusiasm of the worthy Professor X. in honour of Schumann's music, I felt the same soporific influence again, which came over me at the performance of his symphony at the Old Philharmonic, and which caused me to fall into a deep sleep, the calmness of which, however, was soon disturbed by a kind of vision mixed with nightmare," etc., etc.

We cannot call to mind a single new vocalist or instrumental performer who achieved a second-rate reputation." In addition to all which there had been Alfred Mellon's Orchestral Union, with a band of merely thirty players but a reasonable programme occupying only "a little more than one hour and a half in performance"; a Union that, when developed into the Musical Society of London, in 1859 secured a fiasco for Schubert's glorious symphony in C—which Mendelssohn had absolutely been obliged to withdraw from rehearsal fifteen years previously, for reason of the insults to which it was then subjected by the Philharmonic band.

As may be inferred from the above, the London public of those days was averse to unfamiliar compositions, had settled down to a highly restricted musical diet. "The unanimous outcry"—says the *M. World* of August '54—"has been that *St Paul* and *Israel in Egypt* 'do not pay,' and that, whenever they are performed, a certain loss to the treasury ensues. Thus we have no end of repetitions of the *Messiah*, *Elijah*, and the *Creation*, which are presented so constantly that they run the chance of palling on the ear by too close and every-day familiarity, if not that of being evaded like the reiterated and unwelcome applications of a dun. It is all very well at the great provincial gatherings to give one or all of these masterpieces at every festival, since the majority of the audience assembled at such meetings only enjoy the advantage of hearing them executed on so grand a scale *once in three years*. But in London the system cannot possibly last, since not only at the Sacred Harmonic Society, but at the London Sacred Harmonic Society, at the Harmonic Union, and at Mr Hullah's concerts in St Martin's Hall, the same three oratorios, being stock pieces, are repeatedly performed in the course of the winter and spring."

Moreover, this same leader gives us an instructive peep behind the scenes: "That the influence of the Autocrat of all the Orchestras has been extremely beneficial, up to a certain point, to the Exeter Hall performances, is unquestionable. But, as at the Philharmonic Concerts [Costa reigned there 1846-54], a great stride was made in a short time, and then—'halt' was the order of the day. We have heard almost as unsatisfactory performances, even of so familiar an oratorio as *Elijah*, under Mr Costa's direction, as we ever heard under that of his predecessor, with whom, of course, we do not think of comparing him.

Either Mr Costa has not the power, or not the will, to go on progressing. If he has the first he has not the last, and, if the last, not the first. We admire his habits of discipline, but we should prefer to see them exerted with greater regularity and persistence. The *ultima Thule* of a conductor's aspirations is surely not to get rehearsals over as soon as possible, or to do without them altogether. These, however, are both parts of Mr Costa's system, and hence his popularity with the gentlemen of the orchestra."

So everything was not for the best in the best of all possible worlds, even *before* Richard Wagner's "disastrous season," Mr Davison. At the end of July '54 the *M. World* had said: "It behoves the members, if they take any interest in the future prosperity of the Philharmonic Society, to keep a sharp look out after those in whose hands they annually entrust the management of affairs. . . . With regard to the orchestra, moreover, there has been no improvement of late, while the system of rehearsals remains as imperfect and unsatisfactory as ever. With the vaunted influence of Mr Costa, conductor in *perpetuo*, this is inexcusable. Year after year, the same faults are remarked in the performance of the same symphonies. The do nothing, or care nothing plan, which is adopted at the Royal Italian Opera, obtains equally at the Philharmonic. The vocal music is always badly accompanied, and the concertos are not much better [remember this]. If the public is still expected to pay four guineas for a season ticket, or a guinea for a single concert, some stringent reforms must be brought about, or the Philharmonic Society will certainly lose its position." And when the true reformer came, you did not take to him either!

As the præ-Wagnerian Philharmonic style is of peculiar interest through its consequences, I will specify a little. Re the third concert of the season 1854, quoth the *Musical World:* "The execution of Spohr's symphony was not so satisfactory as might have been desired, though in some respects it was very fine. The first *allegro* would have been unexceptionable, had there been a little more delicacy and precision in the more prominent passages for the wood instruments . . . The *andantino* was taken too slow, and suffered materially in consequence. The same fault was attributable to the *finale*, which is marked *allegretto*, and was taken almost *andante*. The whole sentiment of the movement was thus destroyed. But how often must we insist that for such large and elaborate compositions

as the *Power of Sound*, more than one rehearsal is imperative; but the Philharmonic Society disdains to afford more than one rehearsal to any work, however intricate and difficult." Of the sixth concert of that season: "Mozart's exquisite and passionate symphony [G minor] was played with great vigour and precision. A *piano* now and then would have been pleasant, but it seems to go against the grain of our orchestras to play soft. They are not like Othello, who instructs his clown to ask the serenaders of himself and Desdemona for 'some soft music'; nor is Mr Costa at all like the Moor of Venice, who 'cared not greatly for music *that might be heard*.' He loves to *hear* his music; and so do we; nevertheless, a *piano* in Mozart's symphony would have been pleasant." And of the final concert: "The overture of Weber [*Freischütz*] was carefully played, but with the true Philharmonic energy—which, if toned down by a little delicacy and refinement, would be doubly refreshing. The C minor went, as the C minor rarely fails to go at the Philharmonic Concerts—with wonderful brilliancy and *aplomb*—but with such an abundance of overdone *sforzandi* and 'tremendous' accent, that we were fain more than once to ejaculate, with the Latin Grammar—'*Jam satis!*' The wind instruments were out of tune in the picturesque overture of Spohr [*Jessonda*]; but the rest was all that could be desired" (*M. Wd* June 24, 54).

It was an orchestra brought into this coarse flamboyant state that Wagner was suddenly called to take in hand. What could he do with it in one season? His original stipulation had been for "several rehearsals of each concert," as we have seen; at Papa Roeckel's advice he had abandoned that stipulation—if he hadn't he would never have been in London now, for we have just heard Davison complain that "the Philharmonic Society disdains to afford more than one rehearsal to any work." With only one rehearsal for each of these interminable programmes (saving one), how was it possible to regenerate the style of performance except in single cases here and there? At the end of five seasons it might perhaps have been accomplished; not in one. Nearly three lustra later, he refers to the subject in his essay on *Conducting:* "The thing flowed on like water from a public spout; to check it was out of the question, and each Allegro ended as a veritable Presto. The trouble of in-

terference was painful enough; for, not until one had got the correct and duly-modified tempo, could one discover the other sins of rendering that had lain concealed beneath the general flood. To tell the truth, this orchestra never played otherwise than *mezzoforte;* it never attained either a genuine *forte* or a true *piano*" (*P.* IV. 306-7)—another endorsement of Davison's past strictures. And but a few days after his first concert, to Liszt: * "The band, which has conceived a great liking for me, has skilled technique and fairly quick intelligence; but it is absolutely ruined as regards expression, has no *piano* and not a nuance. It was astonished, tho' delighted, at my way of taking things."

Saturday the 10th of March was the date of Wagner's presentation to his season's bandsmen, merely two days in advance of the first concert itself. Says Praeger, in his slippery English: "The rehearsal and the introduction of the band of the Philharmonic was a nervous moment for me [he should say, Sainton]. I knew the spirit of opposition had found its way among a few members of the orchestra; indeed, it numbered one at least, who felt himself displaced by Wagner's appointment.† However, Wagner came. He addressed the band in a brotherly manner, as co-workers for the glory of art; made an apt reference to their idol, his predecessor [i.e. Costa; but *Wie*, "their Penates, Mendelssohn"], and secured the good-will at once of the majority. I say advisedly the majority only, because they had not long set to work when he was gently admonished by some that 'they had not been in the habit of taking this movement so slowly, and that, perhaps, the next had been taken a trifle too fast.' Wagner was diplomatic; his words were conciliatory, but, for all that, he went on his way, and would have the *tempi* according to his will. At the end he

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* As I have had occasion to state before, this letter is wrongly numbered 179 in the *W. L.-Corr.;* it must have been written about the 16th of March, whereas no. 180 would fall to the 13th or 14th.

† Obviously meaning Charles Lucas (born 1808), father of Stanley Lucas (secretary of the Philh. 1866 onward). Chas. Lucas not only was a director of the Philh. 1854-5, but also a 'cellist in its band, and according to the *Sunday Times* (vid. inf.) he appears to have been a possible candidate for the conductorship before Wagner's engagement. Praeger's suggestion of jealousy on L.'s part, however (*cf.* 223, 246, 265), may be due to the same personal pique that in '55 dictated his jibes at the Royal Academy of Music, where Lucas had been conductor since 1832, in succession to Cipriani Potter—whom L. also succeeded as Principal, 1859 to '66.

was applauded heartily, and henceforth the band apparently followed implicitly his directions" (*As I*, 234-5). Leaving that subject to divers cautions, we pass to the testimony of Klindworth and Sainton:—

"He was quickly on the best footing with the band"—says Klindworth—"In spite of his repeated censure of the jog-trot lack of character that had become a habit in its playing, the charm of his commanding individuality soon silenced all opposition; and a constantly increasing veneration for him evinced itself in the endeavour to follow his hints, to satisfy his wishes." Then the violin-leader's account, per Hueffer: "Wagner's professional prospects appeared at first very bright. M. Sainton gives an interesting description of the first rehearsal, at which Wagner conducted the Heroic Symphony of Beethoven without book—at that time an almost unprecedented feat of memory, although since then Herr Richter and other conductors [Bülow in the fifties] have imitated it. The orchestra and the few persons present were at once astonished and delighted at the new reading given to the familiar work, the delicacy of the *nuances* insisted upon, the intelligence and fire with which the melodies were phrased. After the rehearsal the musicians broke out into a storm of applause such as has been seldom heard in an English concert-room."

We also have Wagner's own contemporary evidence, from his letter of March 20 to Otto: "If I wanted to be installed here for a series of years as conductor of the Philharmonic, there is little doubt that I could easily effect it, as these people see that I'm a good conductor; tho' *that* would be the only delight I could gain here. . . . After the first rehearsal, when Sainton embraced me in an ecstasy, I couldn't help calling him a 'téméraire' who might think himself lucky he hadn't been found out this time [p. 150 *sup.*]. This man is most congenial to me." Nor can there be much doubt that it was mainly due to Sainton's helpfulness and quickness of response, that Wagner was able to pull his first rehearsal through with such éclat that "the directors gleefully importuned me to give something from my own compositions at the very next concert," as he himself tells Liszt—a general satisfaction confirmed by their secretary, Hogarth, in his report (first concert) to the *Illustrated London News* of March 17: "Though the whole orchestra—till the rehearsal, two days before

—were utter strangers to him, yet that single rehearsal had established so thorough an understanding between them, that, at the concert, every piece was performed with a clearness, spirit, and delicacy which we have never heard surpassed; and this was the more remarkable, as his manner of marking the time, and his readings of many passages, differed materially from those of his predecessor. The soft and subdued tone with which he made the orchestra accompany the vocal music was especially remarked by every one present. So convinced were the audience of the admirable manner in which he had acquitted himself that, at the conclusion of the concert, he was saluted with repeated rounds of applause."

So we have reached Hanover Square at last, and will glance round us ere the new conductor makes his public bow.

Just four months before the birth of Richard Wagner, was the Philharmonic born itself, "for the encouragement of orchestral and instrumental music." Starting with a membership of thirty, that number was presently increased to the famous Forty, to which must be added a lengthening tail of associates—sixty at the time we are dealing with. The Members paid a subscription of three guineas, the Associates (voteless) of two guineas per head; whereas ordinary subscribers had to pay four guineas for the series of eight concerts, and the improvident were admitted at the preposterously high figure of one guinea for a single ticket, £1. 10s. for a double, and £2. 5s. for a ticket to admit three. In some years handsome profits had been derived from these high charges, and occasionally the Society indulged in the purchase or commission of original compositions (e.g. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony); the season of '54 had resulted in a trifling loss (£50), but the Society had still a fat balance of some £3000 at its bankers, yet it never entered the directors' heads that the most profitable employment of that balance would have been the devotion of a part thereof to a crying need—additional rehearsals.

The most famous composers invited to conduct these concerts prior to Wagner's engagement, had been Cherubini, Spohr, Weber and Mendelssohn (he figured in four different seasons). Their original locality was the old Argyll Rooms, Regent Street; that building burnt out in 1830, the concerts were transferred to the foyer of the Opera House for three seasons, and then in 1833 to Hanover Square; where they continued to be held till the end

of season 1868 (moving to St James's Hall in 1869). Many of us can still remember the well-proportioned oblong with its big mirrors and resultant fine acoustic; some of us have dined in that same hall transformed into the coffee-room of a club (St George's): to-day, as in the case of its Piccadilly supplanter, not even its shell remains, for the whole building has been pulled down and replaced by "Hanover Court" flats. Its seating capacity in '55—apparently with no balcony then, save for the three boxes across the east end—was sufficient for an audience of 800.

Now, an audience of 800 is quite an ideal mass for a conductor to get into touch with, provided it be impressionable and responsive; but what glow could be expected from folk well-off enough to pay a guinea apiece, or fifteen shillings upon taking a quantity, for the privilege of listening? At the Opera it is different; other senses are appealed to there, besides the ear. At a classical concert, given at such prohibitive prices, it is morally certain the audience would consist almost exclusively of the unemotional middle-aged; only the merest sprinkling of *jeunesse dorée* would be attracted by such fare, whilst strenuous young men and maidens of the middle-class—the most fruitful soil for every sowing of new ideas—perforce must stop away from what would eat up in one night their pocket-money for a month or more. Thus the very superiority and respectability of the whole affair was the true rock ahead of our hero. With an audience as enthusiastic as he had left behind at Zurich, the critics must have gnashed their teeth in vain; but what wave of enthusiasm was ever like to bear these moneyed sires and matrons off their well-shod feet? It would have been indecorous —and perhaps they were gouty.

How had they behaved last year? Davison himself shall tell us: "On Monday night, in the Hanover Square Rooms, resplendent with the lamps of Leslie, and dingy with the dirt of half a century, the old Philharmonic Society solemnised the inauguration of its renewed life. . . . Mr Costa, who remains at the head of the orchestra, conducted with his usual energy and decision, and was well received on appearing upon the platform. The audience, not very numerous by the way, was one of the coldest and most apathetic we ever remember to have seen at a Philharmonic concert. There was not a single display of enthusiasm throughout the evening. Even the slow movement

of Mozart's symphony [*Jupiter*], an exquisite inspiration, although exceedingly well played, passed off frigidly" (*M. World* March '54). Again: "The conceit of the Philharmonic *abonnés* is only equalled by that of the Paris Conservatoire. It would be well if the performances of new works, by the offhand gentlemen who compose the band, were really such as to authorise the subscribers in emulating the affected *nonchalance* and stolid bigotry of the French 'perruques'" (Apr. 29, 54). On the other hand, the virtuoso reigned supreme even within these hallowed walls, for after Molique had played a violin concerto of his own, "the great artist retired from the orchestra amidst a storm of applause." Such being the type of audience confronting Wagner, the value of each single plaudit gained by him needs multiplying by ten.

And now for the programme of Monday, March 12, 1855:—

Part I.

Sinfonia, No. 7 (Grand)	Haydn.
Terzetto, "Soave sia il vento" . . . . (Clara Novello, Mr and Mrs Weiss)	Mozart.
Dramatic Concerto (Violin, Herr Ernst) . .	Spohr.
Scena, "Ocean, thou mighty monster!" . . (Clara Novello)	Weber.
Overture, "The Isles of Fingal" . .	Mendelssohn.

Part II.

Sinfonia Eroica	Beethoven.
Duet, "O my Father" (Mr and Mrs Weiss)	Marschner.
Overture, "Zauberflöte"	Mozart.

With what effect?—The first surveys to appear, were those in the *Morning Post* and *Daily News* of March 13; written, therefore, under immediate impression of the performance the night before. As the work of an absolute neutral, the first-named shall take precedence in this pair. Beginning with a remark that "our opinion of Signor Costa, as a conductor of classical German music, has been frequently expressed," a desire to "avoid odious comparisons" and simply to "speak of Herr Wagner in his quality of orchestral director, without any prejudice for or against, derived from his reputation and ability in other departments of art," the *Morning Post* proceeds:—

The performance of last night sufficiently proved that the committee have made a wise selection; for, taking into consideration the

unhappy fact that the new conductor had been allowed but one rehearsal, with a band to whom his readings and style of beat were utterly strange, the general result was most honourable both to him and to them. Many portions of the great symphonies, Haydn's No. 7 (grand) and Beethoven's "Eroica," and the whole of Mendelssohn's Overture to the "Isles of Fingal," have never, in our recollection, been so well played in this country; and we are consequently justified in thinking, that the truly poetical feeling which animated these would have been apparent throughout but for the disadvantages to which we have already alluded.

That there is a deeply conceived purpose, emanating from conscientious study of the score, in all Herr Wagner's readings, it were impossible to doubt; for, although he displays a perfect command over the orchestra, by frequently hurrying or slackening the time at will (too frequently, perhaps, to satisfy the strictly orthodox, who consider a conductor's duty to be purely metronomic), such deviations are never the offspring of mere caprice, or a silly desire to parade practical skill; but are only employed to express an intelligible idea or to enforce some striking effect of *chiaro-oscuro.* It is notorious that Beethoven himself made such changes, or in other words, took such "liberties" with his music, and it is more than probable that his great predecessors, Haydn and Mozart, did the like with theirs; but what those changes precisely were, we have no certain means of knowing, and consequently a conductor of the present day can only read their works as he understands and feels them, and each may possibly take a different view of particular passages. We will not venture to say that all Herr Wagner's conceptions were perfectly just, neither did they, in every instance, agree with our own; but we can assert, without fear of contradiction, that they were invariably intellectual, and frequently beautiful no less than new. Herr Wagner was most flatteringly received both by the band and audience, which included, as usual, all the most distinguished artists in London. His success, therefore, was complete. [Notice of the other items and the artists—ending] On the whole, the concert was admirable, and most worthily inaugurated the new season.

The musical critic to the *Morning Post* of those days was William Howard Glover, born at Kilburn 1819, a composer whose brief cantata *Tam O'Shanter* was soon to be conducted by Berlioz at the New Philharmonic (see cap. VI.). Glover had made a long tour abroad, and thus freed himself to some extent from our insular fixed notions; in fact, he tells us in his next critique that "a book entitled 'Kunst-werk der Zukunft, replete with imagination and eloquence, was reviewed at length some

time back in this journal" (forestalling the traditional 'first champion'?). The critique in the *Daily News*, on the other hand, was written by Hogarth. Says Davison, a few weeks later, "A New York print refers to certain articles in the *Daily News* and *Illustrated London News* as proofs of 'the remarkable change that is going on in the opinions of the London critics' about Herr Wagner. To these papers he [it] might have added the *Spectator* and *John Bull*. The musical articles in all four are contributed by *one pen;* and that pen, though the goose-quill of a highly respectable gentleman and excellent connoisseur, is hardly more the pen of a free agent than the two-handed sword of the Scottish guards, who served in the armies of the French kings, could be considered a free weapon. The wisdom of the Philharmonic Directors, like the majesty of the Kings of France, must be maintained inviolate." Benevolence was to be expected from Hogarth as a matter of course, at least at the commencement of this Philharmonic season; yet his tribute to Wagner's merits as conductor carries also with it all the air of true conviction:—

Haydn's charming symphony certainly never was more delicately played. It is full of delicacy and refinement; and these qualities were fully displayed by the manner of its performance. The *andante* was taken a little slower than has been usual here, and we thought the effect of the movement was thereby enhanced, as it allowed Haydn's round and beautiful melodies to produce their full impression on the ear. Mozart's fine Terzetto was admirably given by the three singers; and the effect of their voices was heightened by the soft, undulating murmur of the orchestra, which on this occasion [mark that] achieved that great desideratum, a true piano. Ernst had triumphant success in Spohr's dramatic concerto. . . . The effect of this concerto, too, was greatly heightened by the delicate and subdued tone of the orchestral accompaniments. . . . Beethoven's sublime sinfonia *Eroica* was magnificently executed from beginning to end. We never heard the band play more evidently *con amore*, nor ever observed a better understanding or more complete sympathy between them and their conductor; and we felt as much gratified as surprised that such a result could have been effected by a single rehearsal. The funeral march was taken a good deal slower than usual; and the effect (as it struck us) was to heighten the solemnity and pathos of the movement. Marschner's duet from the *Vampyre*—a good composition, though it loses much of its effect when deprived of its theatrical accessories—was exceedingly well sung by Mr and Madame Weiss, and the

concert concluded with the overture to the *Zauberflöte*, played with extraordinary fire and brilliancy.

Whatever differences and controversies may exist as to the doctrines and tenets of the musical school to which Herr Wagner is said to belong, and as to his own character as a composer—disputes into which we do not enter, because we are as yet unacquainted with their merits—on one point he has left no room for question—his consummate excellence as an orchestral chief. He has all the requisite qualities: thorough knowledge, firmness, energy, self-possession, and the happy art of making his meaning clear to the performers. His merits made themselves more and more apparent during the whole progress of the concert; and, at the conclusion, the convictions and feelings of the audience were evinced by a burst of applause from every part of the room. A second burst of applause recalled him, after he had left the orchestra, to express his acknowledgments for his reception.

The 14th, i.e. the second morning after the concert, brought the *Times* report; and really, after Davison's alleged declaration prior to Wagner's "landing on these shores" (cf. p. 113), on the whole it is surprisingly mild. A fairly long preamble is devoted to the still unfathomed mystery of Costa's secession: "The separation from Her Majesty's Theatre—professedly accelerated, if not indeed originated, by Mr Lumley's disinclination to allow his *chef d'orchestre* permission to accept the directorship of the Philharmonic Concerts—was defended by Mr Costa in long letters to the newspapers; while, in 1855, these same Philharmonic Concerts are suddenly thrown aside without a word or syllable of apology. It can hardly be said that Mr Costa had anything to complain of in Hanover Square. On the contrary his word was law, his authority supreme. He had, indeed, all his own way, and rather governed than was governed by the directors, who regarded him as the life and soul of the society," etc., etc. Then we have a brief account of the now well-worn story of "the uncommon straits to which the unhappy directors were put" till one of them "was despatched in search of a conductor all the way to Zurich."

At this out-of-the-way place was found, and immediately secured, Herr Richard Wagner, chief representative of what a certain *coterie* of modern Germans call "the Music of the Future"—a music which (to judge from what we have heard) it is to be hoped, for the sake of the Present, will not be largely drawn upon in advance. Herr Wagner

was about the last person in the world that any one would have dreamt of as successor to Mr Costa. The Philharmonic policy, however, was always somewhat mysterious; and this may account, in a great degree, for the fact of his having been selected. Moreover, it had often been insinuated that an Italian was not exactly the fittest man to preside over the execution of the German symphonies; and, in deference to this floating idea, the managers possibly decided on choosing the very antipodes of their ex-director. Herr Wagner is not only German to the backbone, but ultra-modern German—a preacher of the misty doctrine now maintained at Leipsic, which goes to upset all the received formalities of art, to prove Mozart "a child," Beethoven "erroneous," Spohr "stupid," and the other great masters more or less in the wrong, or, at least, in all respects inferior to the new idol.* Herr Wagner was first known, many years ago, as *Kapellmeister* to the late King of Saxony. Being expatriated, on account of the active part he had taken in the disturbances of 1848,† he left Dresden and established himself at Zurich. He had already produced two operas —*Cola Rienzi* and *The Phantom Ship*—in the last of which lay hidden the germ of his future exploits as composer for the theatre. These were followed in due time by yet another two—*Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*—where, and in the last especially, the Wagnerian system is fully revealed and illustrated. The "system," however, failing to be understood, its inventor was resolved to become his own apologist, and, in a work entitled *Kunstwerk der Tukunft* [sic], he set forth at large his views and opinions to the world. Another book, called *Opera and Drama*, soon followed, with commentaries and detailed explanations of the theories expounded in the first. Since, however, Herr Wagner only came forward last night as a conductor,

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* All this sentence, with a good deal of what follows, is derived, of course, from that mixed-up Sobolewski and his shallow *Reactionary Letters;* cf. cap. III.

† In his letter of June 15 to Fischer (indiscreetly published textually by Brendel in the *N. Z.* of July 1) Wagner remarks on his "sorely compromised political situation having been publicly referred to with great malice by the Times"; but, as it is customary to give a brief life-sketch of any celebrity on his first appearance in England, it is difficult to see how the cause of his enduring exile could be more gently touched on, unless it were by omission of the then traditional "active." To represent a foreign visitor as a political outlaw, was rather to arouse a Briton's interest in, and even sympathy with him, than otherwise. If Wagner could have been advertised as the dethroner of six German princelings, Hanover Square Rooms would have been packed at once; as it was, they were very much fuller at the second concert than the first. No, the "malice" must have been literally read into that allusion by a none too trustworthy interpreter (*cf.* 176, 205, *inf.*), who would have done far wiser to dwell upon the unexpected bits of praise.—See also D.'s mere passing reference to the Dresden revolt in the *M. Wd* of March 24, farther on.

this is not the place to examine his doctrines. It will serve for the moment to say that his assumed mission is to elevate poetry in the lyric drama to its ancient place by the side of music—in short, to make it of equal importance. His notion of tune is "melody spoken," and in all respects he insists that the words and the music should go hand in hand. Of Greek music nothing positive is known, beyond the fact that it bore no resemblance to what is called music in the present day; and as the art now exists—in the state of perfection which it has gradually reached through the hands of successive great masters and men of genius—the theory of Herr Wagner is philosophically false and practically impossible. A perfect comedy, tragedy, or poem, does not want the aid of music; it is complete of itself. If in his own choruses Herr Wagner sets a word to every note, the effect must be at once monotonous and absurd, and the music simply obtrusive. What would become of rhythmical melody? Where would be the "Vedrai carino's," the "Batti batti's," and such exquisite *tunes* as constitute the most potent charm to the multitude in operatic performances, and are not less delightful to the initiated? The notion (which is not quite new, by the way) of bringing music back to the Greek ordeal is subversive of all received ideas, of all that renders music beautiful and entitles it to a place apart among the arts. What are the qualifications of Herr Wagner, as a musician of genius and acquirement, to develop so difficult a theory, may be discussed on a future occasion. Nothing is known of his music in this country except the overture to *Tannhäuser*, which was heard with equal indifference by the public at the concerts of the new Philharmonic and M. Jullien, and is, at the best, but a common-place display of noise and extravagance. He who sets himself up, however, to admonish all the rest of the world of their errors, and has the courage to point to himself as an example to be imitated, should be armed at all points—invulnerable even to the heel—and yet we are greatly mistaken if Herr Wagner, as a minstrel, is not assailable in a great many more places than Achilles as a warrior.

The above may be taken as written in advance of the concert, and might possibly have been amended if Wagner had followed the counsel of the wiser of his advisers, and paid Davison an explanatory call. Much as we may dissent from the position adopted with imperfect knowledge, there really is nothing implacable in it, nothing spiteful, and, save for the remarks on the *Tannhäuser* overture, nothing remotely "abusive." It is directly followed by a criticism of the actual performance :—

The first concert of the season took place on Monday night, at the

Hanover-Square-rooms (as usual) before a numerous audience of connoisseurs, among whom it may be safely asserted the predominant feeling was curiosity—curiosity to know whether there would be any inquiry after Mr Costa, and curiosity to see how the new Conductor would acquit himself. The following was the programme [*see above*] . . . Herr Wagner was kindly received by the audience, and the symphony of Haydn, one of the finest of the twelve "Grand," was executed with amazing spirit. Such a familiar work, however, in the hands of such a company of players, would fare well even without a conductor. It was in the concerto of Spohr (magnificently played by Herr Ernst), the overture of Mendelssohn, and the symphony of Beethoven, that the qualities of the new conductor were put to the test. The result, on the whole, was by no means satisfactory; but this may be accounted for in more ways than one. Herr Wagner's method of using the *bâton* (like that of some other German musicians) must be very perplexing, at first, to those unacquainted with it. The confusion between the "up" and "down" beat, which he appears to employ indiscriminately—so unlike the clear and decided measure of his predecessor—requires a long time to get accustomed to. Moreover, Herr Wagner conducts without a score before him, which says more for his memory, we think, than for his judgment.* Such precedents are dangerous. Supposing a leading instrument, entrusted with an important passage were found "napping" (which is possible), and that Herr Wagner's memory should fail him at a pinch (which is possible—for if Homer "nods," why not the author of *Lohengrin?*)—what would be the consequence?—a dead stand-still, nothing less. Herr Wagner, however, did not "nod" last night, but exhibited unabated energy and fire; and though his "readings" are in many places new and strange, his changes perpetual and fidgetty, his indication of *tempo* sometimes quicker (as in the first movement of the *Eroica*, and the *coda* of the *Isles of Fingal*), sometimes slower (as in the middle of Beethoven's slow movement, and the opening of Mendelssohn's overture), than we have been accustomed to, and although, for these and other reasons too numerous to mention, the band did not go so smoothly, so pointedly, or generally so well as

* Mr H. T. Finck has a good story, for which he cites no authority: "He was given to understand that this was considered a slight on the classical composers; and after a rehearsal of one of Beethoven's symphonies, he yielded in so far to the pressure brought to bear on him as to promise to bring along a score at the public performance. He did so. After the performance the parties who had urged him to use a score crowded around him with congratulations on the excellent result of their advice—until one of them happened to glance at the score on his desk, which proved to be—Rossini's *Barber of Seville!*—This anecdote, if not literally true, is at any rate *ben trovato*" (*Wagner and his Works* I. 451).

we have been used to, we must decline at present to offer any positive opinion about his merits as a *chef d'orchestre.* That the accompaniments to the concerto, and to the vocal music (which, except Marschner's feeble duet, was judiciously selected, and without exception was admirably sung by Madame Clara Novello, Mrs and Mr Weiss) were exceedingly "shaky," and in one part of the concerto nearly came to a full stop, cannot be denied. But these and other drawbacks were mainly attributable to the fact that, as yet, the members of the Philharmonic orchestra do not feel at home with Herr Wagner's manner of beating—a drawback which there can be little doubt will be remedied thoroughly before the end of the season. A great deal may be learnt in the course of eight concerts; and there was quite enough, in the execution of the symphonies and overtures, to show that Herr Wagner is a man of intelligence and firmness, an original and, perhaps, an intellectual thinker. At present, however, he may be said to stand upon his trial; since the concert of last night—which, though it excited much interest, and often raised expectation, caused no enthusiasm—leaves him still to be judged of as a conductor, no less than as a composer, in England. At the conclusion of the performance there was a good deal of applause; but it was partial. The older subscribers (as remorseless critics in their way as the quidnuncs of the Paris Conservatoire) looked ominous; while the "professionals," who are scarcely ever *quite* satisfied, were evidently not quite satisfied on this occasion. There was, however, so far as we were able to discover, no absolute verdict pronounced, either on one side or the other. Time will show, however, whether Herr Wagner is, or is not, the man he has been named.

That being an historic document, I make no apology for reproducing it in full. In fact it was imperative to do so, after Praeger's assertion that Davison had told him weeks before the concert, "As long as I hold the sceptre of musical criticism, I'll not let him have any chance here." Davison is "not quite satisfied" with the new conductor, to be sure, but in nowise ruthlessly antagonistic; his attitude is remarkably neutral, quite honestly so, and might have been converted by a little exercise of tact, as I have already expressed my belief, into that of mild benevolence. But while Praeger's first American indiscretion is on the very eve of assaulting D.'s choler, P. foolishly ships off another, the close whereof is a ridiculous misrepresentation of what we have this moment read. Here is what Praeger wrote a few days after Wagner's first public appearance in London, my authority being his self-quotation in *As I* (N.B. The brief-

lived New York *Musical Gazette* is not interred in our Museum):—

The eagerly looked for event has taken place. Costa's bâton, so lately swayed with such majestical and even tyrannical ardour, this self-same bâton was taken on Monday last (12th March) by Richard Wagner. The audience rose almost *en masse* to see the man first, and whispers ran from one to another [P. had quick ears]: "He is a small man, but what a beautiful and intelligent forehead he has!" Hadyn's symphony, No. 7 (grand) began the concert, and opened the eyes of the audience to a state of things hitherto unknown, as regards conducting. Wagner does not beat in the old-fashioned, automato-metronomic manner. He leaves off beating at times [surely that is Liszt] —then resumes again—to lead the orchestra up to a climax, or to let them soften down to a *pianissimo*, as if a thousand invisible threads tied them to his bâton. His is the beau ideal of conducting. He treats the orchestra like the instrument on which he pours forth his soul-inspired strains. Haydn's well-known symphony seemed a new work through his inexpressibly intelligent and poetical conception. Beethoven's "Eroica," the first movement of which used to be taken always with narcotic slowness by previous conductors, and in return the funeral march always much too fast, so as to rob it of all the magnificent *gran' dolore;* the scherzo, which always came out clumsily and heavily; and the finale, which never was understood—Beethoven's "Eroica" may be said to have been heard for the first time here, and produced a wonderful effect. As if to beat the Mendelssohnian hypercritics on their own field, Wagner gave a reading of Mendelssohn's "Isle of Fingal" that would have delighted the composer himself, and even the overture of "Die Zauberflöte" ("Magic Flute") was invested with something not noticed before. Let it be well understood that Wagner takes no liberties with the works of the great masters; but his poetico-musical genius gives him, as it were, a second sight into their hidden treasures; his worship for them and his intense study are amply proved by his conducting them all without the score, and the musicians of the orchestra, so lately bound to Costa's reign at Covent Garden, and prejudiced to a degree against the new man, who had been so much abused before he came, and judged before he was heard (by those who are not capable of judging him when they do hear him!)—this very orchestra already adores Wagner, who, notwithstanding his republican politics, is decidedly a despot with the orchestra. In short, Wagner has conquered, and an important influence on musical progress may be predicted for him. The next concert will bring us the "Ninth Symphony" and a selection of "Lohengrin," which the directors would insist on, notwithstanding the refusal of the composer. The

"Times" abuses Wagner and revenges the neglected English conductors; mixes up his music with the Revolution, 1848, and falsely states that he hates Mozart, Beethoven, etc., etc., and furthermore asserts, just as falsely, that he wrote his books in defence of his operas; but is so virulent against the man, and says so little about his conducting, that it strikes us the article must have been written some years ago, as an answer to "Judaism in Music." The "Morning Post" agrees perfectly with us as to Wagner being the conductor of whom musicians have dreamed, when they sought for perfection, hitherto unbelieved.

Even the remark about the *Morning Post* is an exaggeration, as the present reader may prove for himself; but that is a detail, compared with misstatements as to the contents of the *Times* article. For one thing, Davison had no more "mixed up Wagner's music with the Revolution, 1848," than P. himself has, six lines previously, when he dragged Wagner's "republican politics" in by the ears. But the chief point is this: you may put that *Times* article under any microscope you please, and you will not find a hyphen in it to suggest the most recondite "answer to 'Judaism in Music.'" Davison's knowledge of *that* was yet to come—a few hours after Praeger penned these lines—and this second piece of folly was to underline it in due course.

Howsoever P. came by *his* knowledge of it, and for whatsoever reason it had taken hold of him, the "Judaism" business haunts him for the remainder of his life. Out of four-and-twenty chapters in his *As*, he devotes an entire chapter to this *Judenthum*, a couple of lines to *Opera and Drama* etc., etc., not a word to *On Conducting!* In the said chapter (xvii—the next before his London pair) he observes that Wagner "could not understand why the 'Musical World' and the London press should so severely flagellate him because of his attitude towards the Jews," and we can well believe him—for Wagner was almost wholly dependent on P.'s exegesis of the Anglo-Saxon journals; but it strikes one as rather cool, from the very man who had waved the red rag in the face of John Bull by dint of a pole supplied by brother Jonathan. In light of P.'s subsequent pages, the opening of that cap. xvii is about the most unblushing farce I ever read:—

"As regards his literary productions, that which provoked most discussion and engendered a good deal of acrimonious

hostility towards him was 'Judaism in Music.' No one knowing Wagner, and writing any reminiscences of him, no matter how slight, could omit reference to this subject. Any such treatment would be incomplete, though it would be easy to understand such omission, for no friend of Richard Wagner would elect to put him in the wrong. . . . Unfortunately, much of the cogency of his reasoning is weakened in the eyes of many by the introduction of the names of two of his most prominent contemporaries, Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, both of Hebraic descent. . . . That he was not animated by any personal motive I am convinced, and that the things he wrote of lay deep, deep in his heart, I am equally persuaded. Finding in me a partial antagonist, he debated the question freely. Perhaps, too, it was a subject impossible of exclusion from our discussion, since, when he came here (London) in 1855, or three [4½] years after his Jew pamphlet [pseudonymous *article*] had been published, the press spared not its sneers and satire for a man who only saw in the grand composer of 'Elijah' 'a Jew' [1] [*Footnote*, "[1] Sunday Times, 6th May, 1855"]. . . . To understand this 'Jew' question thoroughly, one should remember the admiration, the just admiration, in which Mendelssohn was held in this country. He was the idol of English musicians. That he should have been 'assailed' by Wagner because of his Hebraic descent was unpardonable. This was the spirit of hostility with which the larger proportion of the press received him, seeing in him the personal enemy of the 'Jew' Mendelssohn. And thus it happened that references to this question were continually being made, and discussions, occasionally of an angry character, were thrust upon us" (*As*, 205-6—the "us" is good).

To think that on the fifteenth and thirtieth pages after all this show of virtuous indignation Praeger should have given himself so completely away! We have just read the thirtieth (his second American news-letter); now let us recall the fifteenth, where he fondles the hilt of the weapon first used in "the crusade upon which I then entered with so much fervour," his vaunted news-letter to the *Musical Gazette* of Feb. 24, 55 (a date of his own giving): "Wagner once wrote an article, 'Das Judenthum in der Musik' . . . in that same article, which is written with much cleverness, Wagner makes a severe onslaught upon Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, on Judaistic grounds. The editor

of the London 'Musical World,' considering himself one of Mendelssohn's heirs, and Mendelssohn having (so it is said) hated Wagner, *ergo*, must the enraged editor also hate him? He certainly seems to do so, 'con molto gusto.'"—I must be forgiven for repeating this extract (*cf.* 119 *sup.*), as it constitutes a most important factor in the treatment meted out to Wagner in the London press. That Mendelssohn "should have been 'assailed' by Wagner because of his Hebraic descent, was unpardonable" in London, according to Praeger's own shewing: the discovery that he had been so "assailed" was never made in London until that fatuous *Gazette* letter, written weeks before Wagner's arrival, at last flung down the gage. Moreover it was a personal challenge to Davison, and "the power of this gentleman was enormous." Fatuous?—it was all but a criminal tempting of Providence.

A couple of days under three weeks (a calculation most easy to be verified) was the time then taken by the transit of printed matter from New York to London. That would bring the mischief-making "Judaism" disclosure to Davison's office just *after* the appearance of his critique in the *Times* (March 14), but just before he went to press with his *Musical World* for March 17—the first issue subsequent to Wagner's Philharmonic concert. Probably Davison had no distinct idea as yet that his ex-Own Correspondent was the culprit, since this was P.'s first enlistment under the banner of the stars and stripes, but at once he pounces on the "Jew" disclosure:—

The die is cast. Richard has waved his *bâton* in Hanover-square. The "Seven Wise Men" are in ecstasies. A beat "up" (the only beat) is substituted for a beat "down" (a silly beat). Michael Costa is quenched. The "great Tritto" is ignored. The new prophet *is* the only prophet. Liszt was right.

"List!—list!—oh Lis(z)t!"

Strange readings were enforced, and "*sforzandi*" yet more vigorous (we had thought that impossible); while the last pages of the *Hebrides* went faster than probable, and made noise enough to drown the waters that grumble and wail, and rush and roar, in the darkness of Fingal's Cave. The slow chords in the second part of the *Zauberflöte* were reiterated. A flat found its way back into the *Eroica* [see later—*Sunday Times*]. The "Child" (Mozart), the "Erroneous" (Beethoven), the "Stupid" (Spohr), the "Old Wife" (Haydn), and the "Jew" (Mendelssohn), were beaten, as they never were before, in the

Philharmonic Temple. The members of the band were as demons, and shook and trembled with enthusiasm. Shapes like unto those which delirium paints upon darkness were flitting and grinning ghastly in the orchestra. The new prophet, etc.

"List!—list!—oh Lis(z)t!"

The star of Richard shone as a moon in the heavens. The new Prophet *was* the only prophet. Praeger was there, with "the books" in his mind's coat pocket. He wore a Mackintosh and Fez. The "Reactionary" stood still, as the sun at the word of Joshua. A new king had arisen that knew not Michael; and Michael was forgotten by the fiddlers, the quidnuncs and the *Aristarchi*. "It was a glorious victory." Nothing lacked but the statue of William Pitt, which, had the Director[s] sent it a reserved place, with a copy of *Lohengrin*, would doubtless have stalked from its pedestal in the square down to the very concert room—like the stony Commandant at Don Giovanni's supper, scaring away the Philharmonic Leporello—for William hated Jews, and would have exulted in Richard, who crucified Felix and Giacomo. There is but one Wagner, and Richard is his prophet! There is but one Richard, and Wagner is his scribe. The ENTELECHIA of harmony, "*he is*,"—as Aristotle says, in expounding that metaphysical proposition,—"*by reason of him* ('it') *self*"—because he is—a felicitous modification of the phonic elements. Like the Phæcasians, he goes round and round, and might be symbolised by the serpent annulary, with its tail in its mouth. Being psychologically circular, he describes himself. Liszt was right. The new prophet *shall be* the only prophet. Liszt was right.

"List!—list!—oh Lis(z)t!"

There you have the absolutely first direct allusion to Wagner's Anti-Semitism in any *English* journal, and following exactly three weeks after Praeger's challenge from New York: in this case there can be no shadow of doubt that *post hoc* was also *propter hoc*. But that is merely the 'leader'; the same issue of the *M. World* (March 17) contained a detailed criticism of Wagner's début, which, in justice to all parties, must also be transcribed at length:—

Philharmonic Concerts.—The first concert for the season took place on Monday night, in the Hanover-square Rooms, and was well attended, though by no means crowded. The news of Sig. Costa's secession doubtless produced an unfavourable effect upon the subscription list—for, whatever may be the conflicting opinions about that gentleman's capabilities to direct the performance of music so opposed to the style in which he must have been nurtured in his own country,

there can be no question whatever of his popularity. Herr Richard Wagner, too, though he has been making, for years, a great noise and disturbance throughout Germany, was but little known to our London amateurs, whose notions of him were about as misty as his own theories of art. Nevertheless, he was fished up near Zurich, and was engaged by Mr Anderson, at an expense of £240* (£120 more than Mr Costa), which, with the director's travelling expenses, will add something considerable to the outlay of the season, 1855.

The following was the programme . . [followed by a short par. on the choice of symphonies, already quoted p. 124 *sup*].

Herr Wagner was received most courteously. He is a short spare man, with an eager look and a capacious forehead. He conducts with great vivacity, and beats "up" and "down" indiscriminately. At least *we* could not, with the best intentions, distinguish his "ups" from his "downs"; and if the members of the band are down to his "ups" and up to his "downs" by the end of the season, we shall be ready to present each of them with a quill tooth-pick, as a forfeit for our own lack of discernment. The Haydn symphony—a glorious old lady—went with immense *dash*—dash is the word. Of delicacy we observed no sign; while the *sforzandi* were intenser than even under the despotic stick of Mr Costa. So many quickenings and slackenings of *tempo*, we never heard in a Haydn-symphony before. Perhaps it is in "the books," however, and was all right. As for Mendelssohn's overture, that magnificently Jewish inspiration—(fancy a *Jew* who could grope about Fingal's Cave, and give such a splendidly poetical account of his impressions!) was taken slower than necessary at the beginning, and faster than possible at the end. It was rather a "zig-zag" sort of performance, but wonderfully vigorous and animated. The *pianos* (we do not expect *pianissimos*) were disregarded from one end to the other; and this was felt to be especially disadvantageous at the beginning of the two grand *crescendos*, in the middle and in the *coda* of the overture. Perhaps Herr Wagner maintains that the music of Jews should always be as monotonous as the "Clo'-clo'-clo'!" which agonised the poet in the streets.

As for the *Eroica*, that was all "sixes and sevens"—now firm, now "shaky," now overpoweringly grand, now threatening to tumble to pieces. To us it was *most unsatisfactory*. To others it was evidently otherwise, since they praised it loudly. When the beat is understood, however, by the end of the season, it will be a very different thing; but then the concerts are over. What of that? There is next season—1856; and is not Herr Wagner a conductor, as well as a composer, for "the future"? The glorious overture of that divine "child" with the

* The real amount, correctly given by Davison elsewhere, was £200.

long name—Wolfgang Amadeus Theophilus Chrysostom (etc.) MOZART (who will soon be teaching the "Future" to look back longingly to the "Past"—or we are much mistaken), went, as we thought, better than anything else. The long chords of B flat, that usher in the incomparable second part with such pomp and ceremony, were reiterated (not sustained), according to the Weimar fashion. About this we have nothing to say.

Altogether our impression of Herr Wagner, as a conductor, is confused. By and by, we shall better be able to give something like a decided opinion; at present we are tongue-tied.

The fine dramatic concerto in A minor of the "stupid" old Doctor at Cassel, was gloriously executed by the poet fiddler Ernst, but loosely and coarsely accompanied by the band. Herr Wagner seemed *not* to know this "by heart," and in two places was "abroad." Ernst, however, knew it well "by heart"; and got Herr Wagner out of the scrape. It is worth noticing, that the Dramatic Concerto was the first piece ever performed by Herr Ernst in this country—in 1843, at a concert given in the Hanover-square Rooms, for the benefit of the German Hospital. This made the performance doubly interesting.

The vocalists were Mad. Clara Novello, who sang the scene from *Oberon* with superb freshness and vigour of voice; and Mr and Mrs Weiss, who did more than justice to the feeble and colourless duet from Marschner's *Vampyr*. The lovely trio from *Cosi fan Tutti*, by the "Child," would have been better had the accompaniments been smoother and more undulating. In short, Herr Wagner does not appear at his ease either in vocal music or instrumental solos.

Another round of applause greeted the new conductor at the end of the concert; and the audience dispersed, not knowing, for the most part, what to think of him.

The ogre is not so terrifying after all, you see, even when roused by that anti-Mendelssohnian pin-prick. The really worst of it, is that he should be standing between Tweedledum Praeger on the one side and Tweedledee Sobolewski on the other; for "the stupid Spohr" and "the child Mozart" are figments of Herr Sobolewski's beery brain—Wagner had never belittled Mozart, and his sole reference to Spohr had been an expression of most heartfelt thanks in the *Communication*. I cite this as a specimen of the explanations that could easily and gracefully have been made by Wagner, had he overcome his natural reluctance to seek a personal interview with this "rascal" editor. Davison's penultimate sentence, too, confirms the wisdom of the first of Wagner's original conditions, viz. that he should be allowed a

deputy conductor for the solo pieces etc.* The expense to the society could but have been trifling, and it was unjust to subject in public to the caprices of the virtuoso a man whose whole experience had been acquired at the German opera-house; where soloists, as well as band and chorus, not only had to bend to his will, but to rehearse their parts under his direction. It was taking him needlessly out of his sphere, as a lesser light could have met all the requirements—a fine chance for Lucas, in fact—besides giving his body and brain a rest.—In passing, it is curious to have heard Hogarth speak of the "undulating murmur" of the accompaniments and the "achievement of a true piano" (*Daily News*), whilst Davison deplores the lack of both those qualities, notwithstanding that he finds other points to praise, after his fashion.

The following week the *M. World* came out with a snapshot Life of Wagner, but that must be deferred awhile, as we really must get to the bitter end of this concert; and Chorley is bitter enough, tho' not altogether the end. Bitter and brief is Chorley, in the *Athenæum* of March 17—the same date as our last quotation, but seemingly written *before* that three-asterisked disclosure had reached our backward shores:—

Philharmonic Society.—*First Concert.*—Nothing could be much more familiar to the Philharmonic orchestra than the "full-pieces" selected to inaugurate Herr Wagner's appointment as Conductor for the year. These were Haydn's Seventh Grand Symphony, Mendelssohn's Overture "The Isles of Fingal," Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony, and Mozart's Overture to "Zauberflöte." Nothing could be stranger than the performance. The violins were rarely together. The pauses in Haydn's *andante* were very long pauses, and every *forte* was a *fortissimo*. Mendelssohn's Overture was hurried and muddled, without ease or undulation [a fashionable word, apparently],—

* Chorley does allude to this earliest stipulation, in a back-handed way, when reporting on the *fifth* concert: "It is fair to give currency to the plea which, we are told, is put forth,—to the import that Herr Wagner protested, when making his engagements, against taking charge of the vocal and of *solo* music, on the score of admitted incapacity [he did not say *that*]. But how ill does such want of power assort with the consummate musical knowledge assumed by the pretension of conducting certain favourite works by heart! There can be nothing in either *concerto* or *bravura* to tax the quickness or resource of a conductor in comparison with the difficulties, violences, and incoherences of 'the music of the future'" (*Ath.* May 19). Chorley was evidently the type of man who would feel no pity if he saw a race-horse harnessed to a four-wheel cab.

Beethoven's Symphony was a fatiguing piece of exaggeration, stuck full of fierce *sforzandi* and ill-measured *rallentandi*. Further, Dr Spohr's *Scena Drammatica*, got through heroically by Herr Ernst, was as badly accompanied as *solo* could be,—while the hackneyed trio from "Cosi fan tutte," "Soave sia il vento," would have gone utterly to sleep had not Madame Novello (who was in very fine voice) kept it in motion by giving the time with her head to the conductor. Was it worth while to affront the profession in London, and to send a deputation [!] to Zurich, for no better result than this?—Spirit Herr Wagner indisputably possesses,—but of his sense as a reader of great compositions by great masters Monday's concert gives us a poor opinion:—and it remains to be seen how far his fits and starts will be able to impress an orchestra should he be intrusted with the production of any unfamiliar music. The room was thinly attended.

That is the kick of a contemptible bully. Of course the idea still entertained abroad, that writers like Chorley and Davison were myrmidons of the all(abroad)-compelling Meyerbeer, is to be scouted with equal derision: both these Britons were honest, though both were prejudiced. Chorley's criticisms, however, reveal a man of naturally, or at least chronically bad temper; whereas Davison can only conquer his blunt good-humour when *stung* into a fury.

The *Illustrated London News*, good Hogarth's, I have already quoted, and it is scarcely worth while hunting up old files of the *Spectator* and *John Bull* for other products of the same benevolently partial pen.* But there remains one weekly to be dealt with, the *Sunday Times*, the authorship of the criticisms wherein was an absolute puzzle to me until the other day; for the early ones are quite propitious and intelligent, whereas acute hostility invades them, in varying degree, from the date of the fourth concert onward. As the writer, though chiming here and there with Chorley in a fancied detection of musical piracies on Wagner's part, is clearly independent in his expressions of opinion, one cannot adopt the facile explanation that he was

* In chapter VI. I shall give a fair sample, if brief, from *John Bull*. In the present chapter I shall cite a few extracts from the *Spectator's* report on the second concert. Here I need only quote one sentence from the latter weekly of March 17: "Herr Wagner in short completely supported his reputation as a great orchestral conductor; and that such was the general feeling of the audience, was shown by the bursts of applause from all parts of the room at the end of the concert."

cowed by either of the two chief brigands; manifestly he had a personality of his own—can he possibly have come by a personal grudge? Even a critic is human, and perhaps discovery of this critic's name may help us to a solution of the remainder of the riddle, in due time. The *Musical World* of May 12, 55, a perfect mine of revelations, quite unexpectedly reveals that name in course of an article of little other present interest: Henry Smart was the *Sunday Times* critic in those days—an item of information I now offer to *Grove*, in return for the few particulars necessary to borrow from that useful lexicon.

Nephew of Sir George—who "took an active part in the foundation of the Mendelssohn Scholarship," 1848 — Henry Smart was born in the same year as Wagner. After holding other positions of the same nature, "in 1844 he was appointed to the organ of St Luke's, Old Street, where he remained until 1864, when he was chosen organist of St Pancras. He was an excellent organ-player, specially happy as an accompanist in the service, a splendid extemporiser, and a voluminous and admirable composer for the instrument." He also wrote an opera (*vid. inf.*) and various anthems and cantatas, though "it is as a composer of part-songs and a writer for the organ that Henry Smart will be known to the future. . . . As was his music, so was the man—not original, but highly interesting, and always full of life and vigour." Smart died in 1879; "his health had for several years been very bad, and cancer on the liver gave him excruciating agony." The poor fellow had really been a sufferer long ere that, for *Grove* also tells us, of an indefinitely earlier period: "For many years past Mr Smart's sight had been failing, and soon after 1864 he became too blind to write." Now, for a man to go blind at the age of fifty-one (the usual epoch of commencing presbyopia), his eyes must have been submitted for the greater part of his life to a strain they were physically unfit to bear. So that in 1855 we may reasonably range him on the lengthening list of eye-strain sufferers; to whom a very large measure of irritability must always be forgiven, but in whose personal equation it must also be allowed for, as the least affront *may* throw them off the balance of their judgment.

Thus much in preparation for that change of tone the result whereof has *alone* been recorded by Praeger, who never tells us that the *Sunday Times* had been quite the fairest of the unofficial

English papers in its preliminary comments on Wagner's engagement, as also in its criticisms of his first two or three appearances as conductor. Just before our Parallax sped his earliest boomerang across the ocean, the *Sunday Times* of Jan. 28 had come out with the following:—

That, by this appointment, the Philharmonic Orchestra will gain a highly efficient director, we have good reason to believe. Herr Richard Wagner has the reputation of possessing eminently practical qualities for such a vocation. That he has all the details of orchestral management at his fingers' ends; that he intimately knows, and as thoroughly comprehends, all great existing music; and that he has the requisite mental and personal qualifications—energy, decision of character, and strength of arm—are matters of notorious report. That he is a prolific and curious [misprint for "serious"?] composer, a craftsman in the received knowledge of instrumentation, and a bold speculator in the novelties extractable from an orchestra, we know. Furthermore, though his music be so infinitely in advance of the age as to be a stumbling-block to the understanding of those who imagine they perceive a very respectable consummation in the writings of Beethoven, this may be no hindrance to his admiration for more old-fashioned composers than himself. Hector Berlioz, we know, is an idolater of Mozart, Beethoven, and, most of all, of Glück; yet his music resembles none of these, nor anything else, save itself, in the world. And Hector Berlioz, we also know, is a consummate orchestra-director; the best, in our experience, to whom a band ever yielded obedience. The like may turn out to be the case with Richard Wagner; for the sake of Philharmonic prosperity, we trust it will. At any rate, under his management, we shall have an opportunity of hearing an authentic version of "the music of the future," as it is called, and this is clearly a desideratum. That there is something more in this new school than has yet met the ear, we are constantly told; that it need have some yet undeveloped property, if it is to support its pretentions, there can be no manner of doubt.

. . . A perfect conductor, throwing all natural ability into the bargain, can only be made by practice. If Richard Wagner be this perfect conductor, he may, for nine-tenths of his acquirement, thank his stars that he was born a German, that he served his apprenticeship to art in a country where German men are at least offered the chance of proficiency in the study of their choice [he stepped into the shoes of a dead Italian at Dresden], and where German music is not necessarily accounted inferior to all other. In France, or Italy, after its fashion, the same thing would occur. In England, alone, is committed the intense folly of all but denying a musician the only possible means of becoming a great composer or orchestral director, and then virtually

reviling him for being neither the one nor the other. . . . Meanwhile the Philharmonic directors are reaping the fruits of their long and obstinate neglect of the educational claims and wants of young musicians. They had, in their own hands, all the elements of a perfect school for making conductors, as many and as good as they could need; and on the very brink of their present season they found themselves without one! The great Italian, the emperor of all orchestras, would have no more of them; Spohr and Berlioz were both "otherwise engaged," and within but a few days their last hope seemed to hang on a choice between Charles Lucas and Richard Wagner! With characteristic purpose they chose the German—and, for once, they were, probably, right.

Certainly one sympathises with Smart; for my own part, I wish they had chosen Lucas. Nor can one find much fault with his warning to Wagner in the *Sunday Times* of Feb. 5, droll as are the *on dits* to which it gave tongue: "Which being done [£200 granted], Richard Wagner, certified, we presume, that this is to be a matter of yearly recurrence, and voting himself a life annuity accordingly, has announced [!] his determination to expatriate himself and, in company with his wife, his children [!], and all the portabilities of his household gods, to settle down among the fogs, annoyances and barbarities of this benighted island. In this we esteem Richard Wagner mistaken. Two hundred a-year, good money though it be, is by no means the fortune here that it might be in a land where 'eggs are many because pence are few,'" etc., etc.—Need I remind the reader that Wagner had not the remotest intention of "settling" here, but was dying to be back in Switzerland even before he started from it? However, the *Sunday Times* is not unfriendly to him as yet, and we may pass to its report of March 18:—

On Monday evening the executive forces of the Philharmonic Society assembled to commence the operations of the present season, under again a new chief; to this honoured post Herr Richard Wagner, the master of masters, the teacher of teachers, the apostle of the "future," the "coming man" in music—arrived before his time, by the way—being appointed, *vice* Costa resigned [long par. both for and against Costa]. . . .

All things considered—the inaccessibility of Spohr and Berlioz and the difficulty, under present circumstances, of appointing an Englishman—it is not probable that a better choice could have been made. Wagner is certainly a remarkable man. By hook and crook, by words and deeds he has succeeded in making himself a subject of talk and

dispute to well-nigh the whole of the Continent. We know that this cannot be done without some merit; but what proportion merit, in this case, bears to the amount of industrious assumption by which it is indisputably accompanied, we have yet to learn. He has written largely as a musician and not inconsiderably as an author on the principles of art. The chief musical works are the operas *Rienzi*, *The Phantom Ship*, *Tannhauser* and *Lohengrin;* and he has printed at least two literary productions, in which he voluminously enunciates those true principles of music of which he professes himself the discoverer and champion. We cannot now enter on the nature of these principles, though they may furnish an interesting theme at some future opportunity; but when we say that they go the length of condemning all other composers, Beethoven included, as in the dark upon the subject, and, by implication, of proclaiming Richard Wagner *the* musician of the world, it must be at once inferred, either that the author has indeed fallen on some most prodigious revelation in art, or that he is blinded by self-esteem to an extent quite unusual in ordinary mortals. What the value of his music may be, we have not, at present, the slightest fair means of judging. It has not yet been properly heard in this country, and cannot be, except under his own direction. A fitting opportunity will speedily occur, and it will be anxiously looked to by the musicians of England. Meanwhile it is clear from the events of Monday evening, that he has some unusual qualities. His knowledge of the classical composers—even though he despise them—must be exact, and his memory prodigious; for he conducted the great instrumental pieces of the concert without the aid of a score in any case. At all events, if the Philharmonic directors are compelled to elect a foreign conductor, their present choice entitles them to the thanks of the musical community. Either for good or evil, Richard Wagner is decidedly one of the phenomena of the day. If he really has struck on some hitherto untrodden path—if music, in his hands, transcends, in truth and beauty, all that other men have made it—it is fitting that only he should be witness in his own cause. We in England know the classicists, from Bach down to Mendelssohn, as well as they are known anywhere in the world. Let us now, then, make acquaintance with Richard Wagner. A single season of practical demonstration would be worth a century of hearsay and continental criticism. Thus much as to the conductor:—the music he conducted will be found in the subjoined programme [*given*].

This selection is, undoubtedly, excellent. Its instrumental portion contains a magnificent specimen of each of the great contributing masters. Nevertheless, there is nothing startlingly unusual about it. Haydn's symphony—one of his very finest, by the way—must be almost known by heart by every member of the orchestra; and the same may be said of Mozart's *Zauberflöte* overture. Few of

Beethoven's symphonies are so often played as the *Eroica*, and Mendelssohn's "Isles of Fingal" has long taken that place in concert popularity which was formerly occupied by his earlier overture, the Midsummer Night's Dream. These arrangements, however, were wise, considering that the band and the conductor were mutually unacquainted. We merely mention the fact to show that Herr Wagner's duties were not onerous, nor his discharge of them any ultimate test of his ability. Such music, with such a band, could hardly fail to go well, let who will wield the baton. Nevertheless, it is but bare justice to Herr Wagner to notice that he had evidently taken much pains with his rehearsal. Nearly all the *points* he chose to make were well conceived, and he succeeded in commanding a degree of *piano* and a variety of colour, to which this orchestra, fine as it is, is by no means too prone [again, mark this]. Haydn's glorious old symphony went to perfection. Some beautiful effects were elicited by a novel mode of dealing with the pauses in the slow movement; while, both in the time at which it was taken, and the mode of its accentuation, the final *allegro* could not have been better read by the conductor, or more ably executed by the band. We have never heard the force and vivacity of the "strings" in the Philharmonic orchestra more magnificently displayed than in this wonderful movement. Mendelssohn's overture was very finely performed, although the terrific pace at which the *coda* was driven along, would have been nothing short of destruction to executants of an atom less force. The *Eroica* symphony, for the most part, also went extremely well; and, except that the first movement was taken somewhat too fast and that an unmarked and absurd *ritardando* was introduced into the middle of the "Funeral March," by which the necessary decision of rhythm was for the moment destroyed, no fault can be found with the conductor's reading. In the first movement, by the way, Herr Wagner did good service by re-correcting one of the late conductor's "corrections." At the re-entry of the first subject, in the middle of the movement, an A flat in the violins forms a chord of 5-4 (the point will be familiar to musicians) in retardation of the tonic harmony, and this Signor Costa decided to be an error, and had the A flat altered to G. It is just one of those artifices of anticipation and retardation by which Beethoven often produces some of his most surprising effects. The Italian could not comprehend it, but the German of course did, and the point came out in full force on Monday evening. Of the performance of Mozart's overture, it is obviously unnecessary to say a word.

Every conductor has his individual peculiarity in the mode of indicating time; the mechanical wave of the baton has almost every variety of form and every shade of decision. Herr Wagner's must be strangely puzzling to an orchestra unaccustomed to him. His beats are, for the most part, *up* where English custom requires them to be *down;*

and altogether, his motions have an appearance of restlessness and confusion that make a bewildering contrast with the broad and determined manner of his predecessor. To this cause are, of course, attributable sundry perilous approaches to accident which occurred during the evening; and notably so in the opening of Spohr's concerto, where, during a few chords responsive to the violin recitative, the orchestra was completely at fault, and a less experienced performer than Ernst might have been seriously discomfited. All this is, of course, a mere matter of understanding; but the sooner it is established, the better for all parties [winds up with remarks on the soloists].

Taking all these criticisms together, good, bad and indifferent, I think the general conclusion must be that Wagner's initial success was much greater than one would have expected after the hubbub caused by his appointment, but that he had been unable to achieve the impossible, namely in one rehearsal to reclaim the Philharmonic orchestra from its vulgarisation by his predecessor. As to the "confusion" noted by one or two of the critics in his method of beating time etc., probably that was in some measure due to 'stage-fright'; but, as the last account seems to localise it in the concerted pieces, I should say it was far more attributable to the worry occasioned his brain by the straining of astigmatic eyes over scores quite unfamiliar to him. Nature, not pride, had taught him the enormous advantage of giving his eyes a rest by dispensing with a score at the desk; impossible with works he did not know at all, or not sufficiently.

That he had commenced to breathe new life into the band, is indisputable; whether it were capable of suspiring a fuller draught, time alone could shew. To have achieved an approach to *piano* already, was something gained; and if Davison—sharp enough to note the rectification of Costa's doctored Beethoven—was not quite satisfied with Wagner's reading of the *Hebrides*, at least his criticism is all but eulogy compared with what he had said of Costa's rendering (Apr. '54), "Mendelssohn's splendid overture was executed with a boisterous roughness, which left all the delicate points of the score to the appreciation of those who could hear them—which we could not." Others were more frankly delighted with the new conductor's 'reading,' for Wagner himself writes Liszt a few days after: "Singular was the confession of Mendelssohnians that they had never understood the overture to the Hebrides so well, or heard it go so well, as under my direction"—a remark he repeats to Otto on the 20th.

His little London 'circle' seems to have been filled with hope by the outcome of this first concert, if the report "from London" to the *Neue Zeitschrift* of March 23 (by Klindworth?—not P.'s style) may be taken as any criterion: "The first concert of the Philharmonic Society under Wagner's direction took place on the 12th. He was received with the warmest applause both by orchestra and audience. His success was prompt and path-breaking, and will end, I foresee, by becoming a triumph. The opposition of the *Times* is still very strong, but the remainder of the press—particularly since the *Morning Post* declared itself for Wagner—is very favourably disposed to him. You may judge how decisive has been the effect of his first appearance by this single fact, that, shortly before it, he had said he did not think of giving any of his own things, yet the programme for the second concert, a week from to-day, already contains the first portion [!] of Lohengrin, besides the 9th symphony. It cannot fail that the composer will be awarded the same recognition as is meted even now to the conductor, in spite of almost universal prejudice against him."

That Wagner did not share his friends' illusions, may be seen in his immediate correspondence. To Liszt he writes the very day, or next day, after the concert: "Klindworth will doubtless be writing you about my London début; for my own part I have nothing further to say on it, than that I don't quite know what I am here for. The only thing to interest me is the band, which has taken a great fancy to me and is enthusiastic in my cause; that will make it possible for me to bring off at least some good performances, uncustomary here. All the rest, the public, press etc., is a matter of supreme indifference to me." A couple of days after that (to Liszt again): "With the next two rehearsals I hope to get things into a little order. But that hope, indeed my intercourse with the band in general, is the only thing to attract me here; else everything, everything is simply indifferent or repellent to me. The audience was most polite to me, however, both in its reception and still more at the close . . [*Hebrides* bit] . . Enough of that." And a week after the concert *—by which time he has

* In the new German edition (1905) of the letters to Otto, Dr Golther adds a note to this one, to the effect that "21. März 55" stands added to it by Frau Wesendonck in pencil. She would naturally derive that date from the London postmark, but internal evidence ("yesterday's rehearsal") proves this

had his fill of newspaper critiques dinned into him—he tells Otto: "I should be very glad to write you in a better humour, as I know that tidings of my well-being could but rejoice your sympathetic heart; but even to attain that good end I'll make no use of lies. Wherefore I confess at once that, if you are still nursing hopes of my earthly prosperity, I can give those hopes but little nurture. London is a very big, rich city, and the English are extraordinarily wide-awake and sagacious; but luckless I have nothing to do with them. Through their taking me for something other than I am, things will go on for a time without too great offence; and as I'm by no means inclined to tear them suddenly from their illusion out of sheer conceit, I only hope that time may slip by rapidly. Once again, I have nothing to do here. . . . You can see by the nature of these people, true Art is something off their plane, and they are certainly not to be seized except on their pecuniary side. The equanimity with which they listened to the singing of a tedious duet, e.g., just 30 seconds after the close of the 'Eroica,' was an altogether new experience to me. All the world assured me no one takes the smallest umbrage at it; and exactly as the symphony, was the duet applauded. . . . But to think it is my best years of life I thus am wasting, with my artistic energy completely hampered from without! I would far rather forgo all attempt at outward action; for *I* alone can feel my torture in it."

Among the applauders, few or many, in that first night's audience, there surely must have been just one or two of higher culture. How is it, their instinct did not teach them that this was no mere leader of an orchestra, but a genius of incipient world-fame, stuck up there on the platform for their eyes to gaze at? Was there no phrenologist among them, to guess that behind the "capacious forehead" dwelt a brain at least the equal of the cleverest 'quidnunc' in the room? Men of letters and men of science must have been there, besides the professor of music and the wealthy amateur; why did none of them send his card to the green-room and crave an introduction, in hope to shew this stranger with the "eager look" that hospitality which is the right of genius in every land?—I do not believe it was

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letter to have been written on the 20th; if written at night, it would be posted, of course, next morning.

wholly the Briton's alleged exclusiveness, but his shyness and dread lest he should make himself conspicuous. Yet if one sole leader in the world of thought had broken through the senseless barrier of our island etiquette, what a difference it would have made to Wagner for all his stay in London, what a difference, perchance, to the musical future of Old England herself!

As it was, he passed direct from Mozart's *Magic Flute* to the wheezings of that penny whistle. "After the first concert," says *As*, "we went by arrangement to spend a few hours at his rooms. Dear me, what an evening of excitement that was! There were Wagner, Sainton, Lüders, Klindworth (whom I had [*not*] introduced to Wagner as a pupil of Liszt), myself and wife. Animal spirits ran high. Wagner was in ecstasies [?]. The concert had been a marked success artistically, and Richard Wagner's reception flattering. On arriving at his rooms, he found it necessary to change his dress from 'top to toe.' He had perspired so freely from excitement [he had—but from nervous exhaustion] that his collar was as though it had that moment been dipped into a basin of water. So while he went to change his attire and don a somewhat handsome dressing-robe made by Minna [we shall hear more about that in cap. VI.], Sainton prepared a mayonnaise for the lobster, and Lüders rum punch made after a Danish method, and one particularly appreciated by Wagner, who, indeed, loved everything unusual of that description. Wagner had chosen the lobster salad, I should mention, because crab fish [does he mean "cray"?] were either not to be got at all in Germany [and he lived in Switzerland], or were very expensive. When he returned he put himself at the piano."

At that point I draw the line, in this diverting story. A day or two *after* the concert Wagner writes Liszt, "I still have no piano" (see cap. III.). It may be a shame to pull up Praeger in the very act of shaking hands with himself; but this is one of the most positive proofs that he kept no diary or notebook of the only time when he and his biographic victim were at all long together, and that is something to remember. In fact the whole account seems built upon that passage in the letter to Madame, which might apply to any evening, but sounds more like a farewell party: "Vive le punch et la salade de hommard! Vive Lüders qui la préparait! Vive Ferdinand qui devorait les os! Vive Sainton qui venait tard" (etc.—cap. III.).

Together with the piano and the "innumerable 'bits' or references of the most varied description rattled off in a sprightly manner" thereon, we shall have to dispense for this occasion with Wagner's singing and Praeger's tactful remark to his host that it was "just like the barking of a big Newfoundland dog," at which the victim is supposed to have "laughed heartily, but kept on nevertheless." London fogs must have added vastly to the volume of the victim's voice, for *As I* to generalise thus: "Yet though his 'singing' was but howling, he sang with his whole heart, and held you, as it were, spellbound. There was the real musician. He felt what he was doing. He was earnest," etc., etc. Perhaps it was the punch, or perhaps Ferdinand was not the only one who devoured the bones of that "crab fish"; for Hornstein tells us, of but a few months previously: "He did not sing badly at all; with little voice he managed much; just an ordinary sort of voice, but the higher notes rang better," and ear-witnesses of later days have told me much the same. On the other hand, Wagner writes Liszt April 4, "I have completely lost my voice here," and repeats the remark mid-May; which rather cuts the ground from that "convivial meeting" after the *third* concert (Apr. 16), when Praeger says that "Wagner set himself at the piano, and from memory poured forth numerous excerpts from 'Euryanthe'" (the overture whereof he had conducted that evening). Pondering on this latter occasion, frugal P. indulges in a sermon: "Reflections upon the habits and customs of a past generation sometimes introduce us to situations that produce in the mind wonder and perhaps a feeling of disgust. Who can picture the composer of that colossal work of intellect, the 'Nibelung Ring,' sitting at the piano, in an elegant, loose robe-de-chambre, singing, with full heart, snatches and scenes from his 'adored' idol, Weber's 'Euryanthe,' and at intervals of every three or four minutes indulging in large quantities of scented snuff. The snuff-taking scene of the evening is the deeper graven on my memory [than anything else?], because Wagner abruptly stopped singing, on finding his snuff-box empty, and got into a childish, pettish fit of anger. He turned to us in deepest concern, with 'Kein schnupf tabac mehr also Kein gesang mehr' (no more snuff, no more song); and though we had reached the small hours of early morn, would have some one start in search of this 'necessary adjunct.' When singing, the more impassioned he

became, the more frequent the snuff-taking" (for the sermon's continuation see cap. III.).

Yes, Ferdinand, the reflections of some anecdotards do "produce a feeling of disgust"; but we must let you conclude your history of the first symposium. "His volubility at the table knew no bounds. Anecdotes and reminiscences of his early life poured forth with a freshness, a vigour, and sparkling vivacity just like some mountain cataract leaping impetuously forward. . . . That evening, at Wagner's request, we drank with much acclamation [presumably a crowd had gathered in the road] eternal 'brotherhood,' henceforth to 'tutoyer' each other, and broke up our high-spirited meeting at two in the morning." Luckily, Klindworth "ne buvait pas."

Between the first and second concerts came Wagner's decision as to the Berlin *Tannhäuser*, fully dealt with in vol. iv. There were also the negotiations for disposal of the revised *Faust* overture. As to this, in February he had written from Zurich to Liszt: "If someone were to *pay me well* for it, I might be inclined to publish it after all [Jan., "In no case shall I give it out"]; do you think you could try Härtels on my behalf? A little money would be very welcome to me in London, so that I might be better able to save there." One rather fears he did not "save" much, with his "Irish lace" and other presents; but there was the Zurich home to be kept going also, as we shall presently hear.

March 12 Liszt answers him: "I have forwarded the score to Härtels. If you are content with a fee of 20 louis d'or, simply write me Yes, and the score and parts shall come out at once. Härtel will not entertain a larger fee, but the edition will be best looked after there, and I therefore should advise you to give me your assent." Wagner replies at once, "Let Härtels take the Faust-overture, by all that's holy! If they could turn the 20 louis into 20 pounds, it would suit me better, but in any case I want them to send me the money here soon; I don't like dunning the Philharmonic for my fee, and consequently am in need of money. In any case they must send me *proofs of the score* to look through.—For the rest, the publication of this overture is a little *weakness* of mine, of which you are sure to make me thoroughly ashamed by your Faust symphony." Liszt's next explains that it would have been an awkward job to get Härtels to

turn their louis into pounds, consequently he has accepted their offer in Wagner's name; whilst Apr. 4 we hear that the grotesquely inadequate sum has reached the composer's hands the day before, and he would like Bülow to do the pfte version. Then an "atrocious 4-handed arrangement" arrives in London, Wagner proposes Klindworth for a fresh one, should Hans be unavailable * —"in any case it must be a pianist of that calibre" (May 26)—and fears there may be many false notes in the engraving of the score itself, not yet submitted to him, as he had been unable to look through the transcript sent to Liszt from Zurich. How the proof-correcting trouble ended, is not on record; but it is a thousand pities the full score should not have been engraved in time for performance at the Philharmonic, as Liszt desired.

If Haertels paid but little for the greatest of Wagner's purely instrumental pieces, there was excuse for them in the fact that the sale of such works is necessarily limited; but over here we honest English were taking the very bread from his mouth. "An act of Parliament was lately passed"—says Wagner in the March letter to Otto—"according to which it will no longer be possible to secure copyright in works that have already appeared abroad, but only for such as, written in or for England, make their first appearance here. So the first thing to greet me was an exquisite translation of the *Abendstern* and *Lohengrin's Verweis an Elsa*, published by Ewer; and I am informed that a further complete selection of my vocal pieces is contemplated in the immediate future. Everyone seems to have the right to reprint them as he pleases. Consequently I much regret the 'carriage' I recently paid for getting these things sent me to England." We shall soon see insult added to this injury; for the critics mercilessly slated what the publishers had legally robbed. The only correction needed, regards that "passing of an act of Parliament": it was a decision of the House of Lords, and Wagner would have found Davison in the fullest sympathy with him on this point—in theory, if not in practice.

In the *M. World* of Aug. 5, 54, appeared a letter from a correspondent, commencing thus: "Sir, — The long-fought question, whether a foreign author is entitled to a copyright in England, is at last decided. The House of Lords has ordained

* The ultimate arrangements, alike for 2 and 4 hands, were made by Bülow.

that an alien who presents himself in England on the day of publication will be protected; but if he forwards it [his work] by an agent to his publisher, he may be robbed of it. There can be no doubt that the law is thus construed for the purpose of forcing America to conclude an international treaty with this country . . but the injustice of the decision which deprives a large mass of persons of their property fairly acquired, under the sanction of the legislature, is so great that it deserves the fullest exposure," etc. The case was that of Boosey *v.* Jeffreys, and the editor of the *M. Wd* not only commented on it severely in the same issue, but returned to it again and again. Aug. 12, he goes the length of nearly three columns, from which I need merely quote the following: "If the decision had been suggested with a view to the protection of the commercial interests of the country, we should say nothing about it. But when it is remembered that those for whom we are legislating are men of genius (and there are not too many such on record) whose talents are exclusively devoted to our instruction and entertainment, we must protest against it. To revive an old and musty act of Parliament and forcibly interpret it in a spirit adverse to that of the age in which we live, and thus to deprive the man of talent, perhaps of genius, of the means by which he exists—of his bread—is as absurd as it is intolerable. To base the arguments against the poor foreign musician upon the fact of there being no copyright by common-law, is at the best paltry and mean. Of what use is the distinction between common-law and statute-law in a case like this?"

December 1854, *M. Wd:* "The effect of the recent decision of the House of Lords is beginning to be felt . . . in the actual state of musical copyright every publisher robs every publisher. . . . It is an enlivening spectacle, this battle of the music-publishers. The 7s. 6d. edition of the *Huguenots*, put forth in self-defence by Messrs Boosey, is as cheerful to contemplate as the two-penny sheets upon which their own *Rigoletto* has been hawked about by the old clothesmen and hucksters of the trade, who have worked hard to pull down the profession of a music-publisher to that of a street-vendor of cocoa-nuts and periwinkles. . . . The composers, however, are the most to pity, since no one will purchase any copyrights except those of a privileged three or four . . . while [the publishers] can lay hands at indiscretion upon Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words*, why should they

draw upon their bankers in favour of Sterndale Bennett?" Nor, in spite of international treaties since entered into, is the position of musical copyright much better in England to-day; what Davison wrote half a century since, when Wagner was with us, might have been written the hour I expect the present volume to go to press: "Only a few days since, Mr Lover had to spend all the profits he had derived from the sale of one of his most popular songs, in deterring a piratical publisher from appropriating it to his own uses. . . . Men cannot follow a profession without being fed and clothed. Physicians and barristers are well paid for their services, and why not authors and composers, whose works may instruct and entertain generation after generation? How preposterous, that singers should receive enormous sums, and composers—the creators, without whom there would be no singers—be left to mere chance for remuneration!" (*M. Wd*, May 12, 55). For none of his 'three romantic operas,' I believe, did Wagner ever touch a penny in this country, owing to that iniquitous decision: we could well afford to pay him the begrudged £200 to come over and advertise them! No wonder he wrote Liszt, before he had been here ten days, "Taking all in all—I am *very* much depressed.—The world disgusts me!!" No wonder he lent so ready an ear to Parallax' denunciations of us. Did not Davison himself adorn the columns of the *Musical World* from April 14, 1855 to Apr. 26, 56 with translations in extenso of *Lohengrin* and *Opera and Drama* without a fee to Wagner?

Before leading him back to the arena, though, we must follow our hero to a fairly frequent resort of his during at least the first part of his London stay, yet frequent rather for civility's than any other sake. "I have called on Herr Benecke in the City, and he will send his carriage the day after tomorrow to take me to his residence outside the town; you must have given me very high credentials"—he writes Otto, March 20—"To tell the truth, both he and his belong to the party of the *Times* in musical affairs and all; his wife is a connection of Mendelssohn's, as whose adversary people insist on regarding me [we have seen the reason why] notwithstanding that I have been assured his overture to the Hebrides had never gone so well as under my direction. For the rest, the Beneckes have the name here of a wealthy house much given to art (?). We shall see; but in any case I thank you for your kind intention." So Wagner is driven in state to

Campervall, as he prettily spells it, "eight miles from my apartment," presumably also to dine in state. After his second or third visit he sends Otto a witty description of the family assembled at Camberwell of a Sabbath: "*He* is quite a nice man, bourgeois from head to foot, well-meaning and musical; *she* is a relative of Mendelssohn's, shrewd, distant, but—not bad.—Daughters, sons, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nieces and cousins, all sit down to tea after dinner, and get two or three other relations to sing and play piano to them—of course nothing but Mendelssohn. I have gone through this experience twice already; for next Sunday, alas! I have an engagement elsewhere. What the quarter-of-a-hundred wants with me, it doesn't seem quite to know as yet; perhaps it will discover in time. I fancy Benecke's benevolence will also display itself in a quiet manipulation of the press; should a right 'substantial' article come to light in this way, I'll forward it on to you." From an earlier passage in this letter of Apr. 5, to be quoted shortly, it is clear that any such "manipulation" was no desire of Wagner's own; after proudly refusing to make a call in person on any member of the press, it is most unlikely he would advocate the smallest tampering therewith. If benevolent Herr Benecke really attempted it, on the mistaken assumption that British critics were as amenable as some of those in his own country, he could not have done his countryman a worse disservice.—Once more one fears that Wagner had been recommended to the wrong house.

Saturday, March 24, being an 'off' day, so to speak (no Philharmonic concert having taken place that week), the editor of the *Musical World* keeps his pen in trim with a skit upon Wagner as man: "As our readers have been hearing a great deal of Herr Richard Wagner, they will probably be glad to know something about him—to read, in short, an account, however succinct and hurried, of his 'books,' his music, his doctrines and himself. From sources in our possession, and from personal experience, we have gathered a few facts, which, for general convenience, we shall throw into a form half narrative, half critical." That preamble was unfortunately worded, and gave the New York *Musical Gazette* fair opening for a charge of piracy. Nor did Davison much mend his case by his reply: "The article on Wagner was, historically, an abridgment of one which appeared

in the columns of our abusive contemporary, who had himself remodelled it from one much longer, and much better, in *Dwight's Journal of Music*, the best art-paper in America. *These* were 'the sources in our possession.' The opinions were *our own*—quite opposed to those of the New World, which knows little or nothing of Wagner; and *these* were derived from 'personal experience.' When we inform our readers that the editors of transatlantic music-'sheets' (even friend Dwight), have been for years in the habit of borrowing from us wholesale, with or without acknowledgment, they will be inclined to smile at the outcry of our injured contemporary, who has scarcely ever an article worth reading of his own concoction." This unacknowledged borrowing is one of the curses of the lesser journalism, which cannot afford to keep up an extensive staff; but an apology for use of the word "personal experience" was due to *Wagner*—treated as a shuttlecock by both contending parties—not to such a miserable rag as that *Gazette*. For once, Mr Davison, you overstepped the line, unless the knowledge that "He belonged to a well-known theatrical family, one of whom (his brother) is father of Mdlle Johanna Wagner, the singer," may fall within the category of personal experience (see vol. iv.), though more omniscient rumour disputes a certain link in that relationship.

So far as human interest goes, there is not much to quarrel with in Davison's account. If he says Wagner's "education was neglected," unfortunately Wagner had said so himself, in the *Communication*, though he never intended it to be taken literally; if he says, "in 1848 the revolution broke out, extending itself to Dresden, and the *chef d'orchestre* managed to compromise himself, and fled into exile," it was scarcely an unfair wording for an unblinkable fact. But Davison must have been singularly misinformed when he told his readers that *Rienzi* "failed to impress the public" of Dresden, that "*Tannhäuser* was again a *fiasco*. The Dresden public believed their opera conductor was deranged"; and further, that "Liszt, at Weimar, *forced* three of the operas upon the stage. The public, allowed for a length of time to listen to nothing else, at last endured them patiently"—which we must treat as D.'s waggishness. The theoretic works are not exactly travestied in this review, as they have too often been in our day; but its general tone is unpleasant, and one cannot help feeling that Praeger's foolish pin-prick has begun to goad the bull.

There is none of the former bonhomie in this long leader—3½ columns; it is a distinctly hostile act.

On the *M. Wd's* next page: "The directors of the old Philharmonic Society had a rehearsal on Monday of some of Herr Wagner's new compositions. We believe it was strictly private, every member [? "even members"] of the Society not being invited. Was this constitutional?" Monday the 19th March, then, was the first time any part of *Lohengrin* was played in England; whereas Wagner had to divide his attention between his own music, quite new to every member of the band, and Beethoven's colossal symphony. He had written Liszt some three days earlier, "As I am to get two rehearsals for the pieces from Lohengrin, the Ninth symphony was also fixed on; of which I'm glad, as I would not have given *that* with one rehearsal." Says the letter of March 20 to Otto: "I had made much account of being granted *two* rehearsals for the next concert, as I hoped it would give me the opportunity of taking the orchestra thoroughly in hand; but yesterday's first rehearsal has really dashed that hope as well,* since I have learnt that even *two* rehearsals are insufficient for my purpose. I had to pass many a weighty point by, after all, and now see I can never retrieve it in *one* more full rehearsal; so that I shall have to content myself with a very relatively good performance of the Ninth Symphony. As regards my compositions from Lohengrin, this time I was quite overcome by the feeling, how sad it is to have to keep appearing before the public with such utterly meagre extracts from this work; it made me think myself ridiculous, as I know how little people can learn either of me or my work from these sample snips with which I am already touring as my own commercial traveller." That

* Hueffer in the *Quarterly*: "M. Sainton relates that at the next rehearsal [after first concert—i.e. *this* rehearsal], when Wagner entered the orchestra, not a hand was raised to welcome him, the musicians receiving him with absolute silence. He [S.] himself attributes this change of attitude to the influence of the Press," etc. But Wagner is writing the day after that same rehearsal, and starts with a reference to the orchestra being "much attached" to him. Perhaps Sainton really meant the second concert itself, as Wagner tells Liszt July 5, when the season is over, that the orchestra had "always" avoided compromising itself by applauding him in public till the very last concert; and if discipline is to be maintained, an orchestra ought not to be *allowed* to applaud its conductor (tho' it does so abroad) except in welcome and farewell.

extract might have been published with advantage at the time; another is of more personal interest: "Noticing my great exhaustion and depression after the rehearsal yesterday, Sainton would hear of nothing but accompanying me home and waiting till I changed my clothes [drenched as usual, *cf.* 192 *sup.*], whereupon he countermanded my solitary house-dinner and bore me off to his rooms; where I dined most pleasantly with him and Lüders en garçon, and at last became of somewhat better humour.—In London such a man, among the English, is a perfect oasis in the desert."

Praeger also gives us an account of one of these two rehearsals; if he means the *first* of them, his account is discredited *ab initio* by what we have just read. For he says: "It was the first time any [!] of Wagner's music was to be performed in England, and Wagner was anxious. But the rehearsal was reassuring. At first the orchestra could not understand the *pianissimo* required in the opening of the 'Lohengrin' prelude; and then the crescendos and diminuendos which Wagner insisted upon having surprised the executants. They turned inquiringly to each other, seemingly annoyed at his fastidiousness. But the conductor knew what he wanted and would have it." A couple of pages later he returns to the subject, and this time he *must* mean the second (the date whereof I cannot tell): "I remember how surprised the vocalists were at the rehearsal, when he stopped them, inquiring did they understand the meaning of what they were singing, and then he explained in emphatic language what he thought about it. The bass solo was especially odd: the vocalist was taking it as though it were an ordinary ballad, when Wagner burst in fiery song, natural and falsetto [an octave or two higher, then?], illustrating how it should go, singing the whole of the solo of Mr Weiss (the bass vocalist) in such a decided, clean cut manner that it was impossible for the singer to help imitating him, and with marked effect too [your contemporary report says the reverse]. As for the band, that rehearsal was a revelation to them . . [let us skip] . . Traditions of Mendelssohn and Spohr were omnipotent, and omnipotent with the orchestra, and Wagner hoped the conservative English mind would retain 'his' traditions of the 'Choral Symphony,' among which would be found how he had sung the long recitative for the strings,—double-basses,—that ushers in the choral portion of the work. When Wagner first sang this part to the orchestra, they

all engaged in a good-humoured titter, which speedily gave way to respect; for Wagner certainly was marvellously successful in explaining how he wanted a phrase played by first singing it,—a gift it undoubtedly was." If P.'s pupils could spare him the time to attend, there may be a speck of truth amid the unconscious humour of his second account; but it savours rather of an adaptation from the well-known revival at Dresden (*P.* VII. 245) apropos whereof Wagner writes old chorus-master Fischer, March 26: "To-day is my second concert; bits from Lohengrin and Ninth symphony. Choruses miserable! If I only had my Palm Sunday choir from Dresden!"

What he did have from Dresden, was his famous Explanatory Programme (*cf.* ii, 129 *seq.*), which has for ever wed the names of Germany's two greatest poets with those of her two greatest tone-poets. Davison had anticipated him by giving it at full length in his weekly of the 24th (same issue as the life-sketch) with a prefatory note: "Herr Richard Wagner, entertaining his own especial notions about the Choral Symphony of Beethoven, of which he is to direct the performance at the second concert of the Philharmonic Society, on Monday evening, will probably be invited to explain them, beforehand, to the audience. He will scarcely do this *vivâ voce;* but it is not improbable that something like the following interesting rhapsody may find its way into the printed programme. —Ed. *M. W.*" It was not a squib or parody, but a fairly good translation of the classic Programme, and I think it very probable that Hogarth had distributed advance-proofs to the newspapers; whether appreciative or not, the editor of the *Musical World* would naturally jump at such good 'copy.'—A brief explanation of the *Lohengrin* excerpts was also printed in the 'book of words.' This has not been preserved, unless it be by some private collector; but how one wishes it had not substituted "Alice" for "Elsa"!

Here is the official programme of March 26:—

Part I.

Overture, "Der Freischütz"	Weber.
Aria, "O salutaris Hostia" (Mrs Lockey) . .	Cherubini.
Concerto, Violin (Mr Blagrove)	Mendelssohn.
Selection from "Lohengrin"—Introduction, instrumental; Bridal Procession; Wedding music and Epithalamium	Wagner

Part II.

Choral Symphony, No. 9 . . . . . Beethoven.

Of the critics, despite his advanced age,* Hogarth again was the first in the field, *Daily News*, March 27:—

The overture to the Freischütz is the most hackneyed of overtures, yet no frequency of repetition is sufficient to destroy its freshness. Hear it as often as we may, it is ever welcome. Last night it was applauded to the echo, and loudly encored; a reception which it owed not only to its own intrinsic excellence, but to the admirable manner—the fire, brilliancy, and variety of effect with which it was played. The manner in which Herr Wagner brought out the beauties of a piece so familiar to everybody was sufficient of itself to show his qualities as *chef d'orchestre*. Cherubini's beautiful air was charmingly sung. . . .

The English public had, for the first time (for we do not take into account one or two lame attempts to play one of his overtures) a specimen of Herr Wagner's qualities as a composer. A fragment of a dramatic work, transferred from the theatre to the concert room, is necessarily heard to disadvantage, being deprived of the scenic spectacle and action which are requisite to display its design and produce its effect; and the more thoroughly dramatic the music is, the more it suffers from such a performance. The selection from *Lohengrin* consisted chiefly of a nuptial celebration of the most gorgeous kind; a bridal procession, with choral songs and tumultuous rejoicings, where the music is associated with all the pomp and splendour of the stage. Wagner's music, however, deprived as it was of these essential accessories, had a great effect, and a most favourable reception. It was found to have much breadth and clearness, flowing and rhythmical melody, and marvellous variety and richness of instrumentation. Wagner, as it appears to us, rivals Berlioz in the power of orchestral combination, and excels him in simplicity and symmetry of form.

Beethoven's colossal choral symphony formed, as usual, the whole second part of the concert. It had been carefully rehearsed, and was altogether very finely performed. The effects produced under Herr Wagner's direction differed sometimes from those to which we had been accustomed; in such cases, we may presume, Wagner's readings are those which are commonly received in Germany [not quite, as yet]. The extraordinary passage of recitative, played in unison by all the double basses, was rendered excessively difficult by being taken in strict time, without the relaxation hitherto allowed. The performers

* He had still vitality enough to keep him going fifteen years, for he did not die till February 1870, in his 87th year of life.

had hard work to execute the phrases; but great energy and impetuosity were given to the effect. An analysis of this great work, written by Herr Wagner, was distributed along with the programme. It is very *spirituel* and imaginative, and ascribes to the composer designs and conceptions which he may never have dreamed of. But, whatever may be thought of Herr Wagner's lucubration in this respect, it certainly disproves any imputation of want of veneration on his part for the greatest of his predecessors.

Bravo, old fellow, for that last clause! In recognition, the bulk of your *Illustrated* report (31st) shall also take precedence of the others:—

The public have been told that [Wagner] is a musical revolutionist, whose object is the destruction of all existing greatness—who seeks to pull down from their thrones all the recognised sovereigns of the art, that he may raise himself to supremacy in their room. Such, we are informed, is the purpose of his critical writings; and, it is added, his extravagant doctrines are illustrated by equally extravagant compositions. It was with no small surprise, therefore, that the public, thus prepossessed, listened to Wagner's music on Monday evening. In place of finding it to be obscure, unintelligible, and studiedly unlike anything ever heard before, they discovered that it was clear, simple, melodious, and not at all hard either to perform or to comprehend. The audience were delighted; their prejudices were overcome by their feelings, and they applauded frankly and warmly; all but the professional "native talent" clique, who comforted themselves by trying to convince everybody who would listen to them that the music was conventional and commonplace. Even from the slight specimen now given, it was evident that Wagner's music is dramatic in the highest degree. Such music suffers greatly by being transferred to the Concert-room; but we felt satisfied, in listening to it, that, with the scenic action and adjuncts of the Opera-house, it would be as effective as the music of Meyerbeer himself. In regard to Wagner's character as an orchestral conductor, there was not on this occasion a single dissenting voice. His great skill, and its happy results, were felt and acknowledged from beginning to end of the concert.*

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* Hogarth—as we have heard from Davison—also wrote for the *Spectator* and *John Bull*. An extract from the former must suffice us here: "It is felt on all hands that the present conductor, Herr Wagner, gives a certain newness of character even to the orchestral works which are most familiar to us. . . . The completeness with which the performers are 'held in hand' by the conductor has always been a marked feature in German orchestra-playing . . . Wagner has already obtained this control over his band; a fact willingly admitted by the ablest of its members . . . There was greater

As far as his influence went, Hogarth indeed was a 'champion' worth having; but unfortunately his official connection with the Society would somewhat discount his opinions in the eyes of those who knew. That this was Wagner's view, may be seen in his letter to Otto of April 5: "You wish for newspapers? Yes, but what are they to contain? Something to enable you to strew sand in people's eyes about my successes here? For that the 'Illustrated News' and 'Daily News' alone would be of use; these are furnished by the paid secretary of the Philharmonic, Mr Hogarth, with favourable articles on the society's concerts, consequently on my doings also. A few other critics find the tone of Messrs Davison and Chorley too impertinent, and therefore split the difference, leaving me with this or that good quality, but not gainsaying this or that defect. I dispute the capacity of any of them, either to judge me* or even to hear without bias what I give them to hear. . . . Everyone who lives here is so firmly convinced of the impudence, good-for-nothingness, venality and vulgarity of the local press, that—to speak candidly—I do not even care to soil my hands by taking such a paper up; whoever understands anything, and really has an independent opinion, never mingles with this gang of Jews."—We happen to know who that "everyone" was, and it is to be regretted that he did not confess to Wagner his earlier association with the

softness and delicacy, and consequently greater variety and contrast, than we ever heard before in this symphony. . . . *En somme*, Wagner's character as a *chef-d'orchestre* is settled; as a composer it is still *sub judice*."

* From a little lower down: "The other evening [March 28] I was at a concert of the New Ph. Soc. A whole string of overtures, symphonies, concertos, choruses [Horsley's *Comus*, Mendelssohn's "O hills, O dales"], arias, and so on—a perfect joy; all conducted slick by Dr Wylde till all were finished, which was fairly late. Sir Public applauded, as usual, and in all the next day's papers this concert was the finest of the season [the Queen was there]; immediately after the second conducted by me, this concert was treated to precisely the same praise as mine by my most favourable critic. Wouldn't you like me to send you these newspapers?"—From a previous passage it appears Wagner had sent Otto, or perhaps Mathilde Wesendonck, a "letter on the second concert" (not preserved) which had made them hope he was prospering; but he now recommends some "sobriety" in their expectations: "It may be true my music pleased the audience the other night; in fact, I find that still confirmed. Good! but there's an end of it. Exactly in the same way as my music, does the most wearisome stuff please these people; and exactly as my renderings, are renderings of the vilest sort acclaimed next day."

"gang" (which I don't believe embraced a single Hebrew).—To resume: "Thus I have been assured that a certain clumsy veering on the part of the reporter to the *Morning Post*, after the *second* concert, was to have been foreseen, and just because the *Times* etc. had fallen so remorselessly foul of me—which compelled the man to be more prudent; for none of them likes to break entirely with another, as occasions arise when they need each other's services." We can sympathise with Wagner's feelings, yet regret once more the company he kept.

Postponing a further reference to the *Times*, it will be as well to ascertain in what the *Morning Post's* particular offence consisted. Starting with the programme, the critique in the *Morning Post* of March the 28th continues:—

Our opinion of Herr Wagner as a conductor was confirmed on this occasion, when the band, being more familiar with his peculiar style of beat, went much better than at the first concert. His complete command over the performers was strikingly exemplified in Weber's overture, which was encored with enthusiasm. Notwithstanding this compliment, however, which was certainly due to the admirable execution no less than to the conductor's skill in enforcing his wish, we must object to some of the readings. It were impossible, for instance, to justify the slackening of the time where the beautiful *motivo*, which forms the last movement of Agatha's scena in the opera, is introduced. As expression it is incorrect, for the theme is meant by the author to be extremely joyous—a burst of rapture in fact—produced by the sight of the victor's chaplet on the brow of *Max*, and the fine contrast intended by the sad echo of two of its notes, which suggests the unholy influence of *Caspar* and its consequences, was quite destroyed. The bad effect of this misconception was still more sensibly felt when the same *motivo* is repeated in C major, near the conclusion of the overture, and the expression should be still more bright and ecstatic. The grand burst, too, into the key of D flat might have been more artistically prepared by a *crescendo;* and a little more light and shade in the rising and falling passages allotted to the basses at the commencement of the overture, which so practically illustrate the stealthy hovering of the fiend around his intended victim, would have been desirable.* We have now stated

* Glover's and the other men's objections are traversed point by point on the pages Wagner devotes to this overture in his essay on *Conducting* (*P.* IV., 325-31), where we also read: "Eighteen years after the master's death I conducted the *Freischütz* for my first time at Dresden. Recking nothing of the habits that had crept in under my older colleague, Reissiger, I was taking the

all our objections, and have nothing but high eulogy to bestow upon all the rest of this performance. In addition, too, we may express our gratitude to the conductor for relieving us from that intolerably offensive reading to which the Philharmonic audience have been accustomed of late years; we allude to that sudden checking of the orchestra in its fullest swing, in the plenitude of its enthusiasm, near the end, just when the culminating point of excitement is attained, and the most generous scope should be allowed to the sentiment of the players. We have frequently had to protest against this wretched "effect" which acts like a kind of wet mental blanket upon the divine fire of the music, thoroughly damping the sympathetic passion of both orchestra and audience, and now gladly celebrate its removal, at least, from the Philharmonic, where it was rapidly acquiring the unenviable importance which appertains to a public nuisance.

We have also to thank Herr Wagner for doing away with that abominable thump upon the drum in the opening movement, which was nearly as great an infliction as that other "effect," and substituting what the composer intended, namely, a gentle touch illustrative of the cold, passionless, monotonous voice of the fiend. This, slight though it be, and apparently insignificant to those not gifted with sympathetic appreciation of the imaginative spirit of Weber, is a true stroke of genius (we do not mean to pun), full of weird mystery and evil prophecy. It is the dim shadow of coming woe.

So far, Mr. Glover is sufficiently firm in his praise, for us to bear with his carping. After a paragraph on the artists, he passes to a very long account of *The Art-work of the Future*, in which account the only passages to take exception to are the following: 1° Where he represents Wagner's gist as follows (cf. *P.* I. 118), "The art of double counterpoint, fugue, and canon is a mere mathematical sport of the understanding—music playing egotistically with itself—and those who excelled in it (*id est*, nearly all the greatest masters) were, in this respect at least, mere selfish cunning tricksters, whose proceedings bore a strong affinity to the shrewd reckonings of Hebrew speculators in the money-market"—the gratuitous insertion of "Hebrew" (never remotely suggested on a single page of *The Art-work*) pointing to inoculation with that virus imported from New York some ten days previously. 2° His mild sarcasm, "The great masters of past

overture's introduction according to my own idea of its tempo, when a veteran from Weber's days, the aged violoncellist Dotzauer, turned solemnly to me and said: 'Eh! *that's* how Weber took it; at last I hear it right again.'"

times were all necessary (though erroneous in their principles), for they were so many links in the great chain of events; and the gradual progress expressed in their works has led up to the brilliant present, begun by Beethoven and to be continued by Herr Wagner, who proposes to re-unite the three art-sisters." At this point I will give the *Morning Post* free rein again, as it is clear that Glover is making an effort, according to his lights, to be impartial:—

Although we dissent altogether from many of the doctrines here set forth, it were most unjust not to recognise in the author of the "Kunstwerk der Zukunft" an original thinker, full of conscientious earnestness and poetical fancy; and we, therefore, give him that respectful attention which intellect and honesty of purpose should always command. To judge a composer like Herr Wagner in *ex pede Herculem* fashion would indeed be an unfair proceeding; and we can only wonder that a gentleman who sets out with the principle that the only perfect rule is that which embraces the mimetic, musical, and dramatic elements, should expose himself to such misconception as must infallibly arise from a performance of his operatic productions in the concert-room, where they must necessarily be deprived of two of their essential properties, and depend wholly upon one which, according to his own theory, should never stand alone. We must, however, speak of things as we find them, and shall, therefore, endeavour to do as much justice as possible to the works given on this occasion, under what must be considered disadvantageous circumstances. The selection [brief account, evidently from 'book of words,' Elsa being twice denominated "Alice"] . . .

In one respect Herr Wagner's music disappointed us. We expected to find it highly, if not extravagantly original, but failed to remark this quality which, in the latter, even more than the former degree, has been given to it by rumour. We observed no marked individuality of style in the score, no epoch-making innovations, such as the very original literary works of the composer had taught us to look for, but instead a succession of very brilliantly-instrumented pieces, which contained nothing strikingly new either in rhythm, harmony or orchestral arrangement. It has been said elsewhere that Herr Wagner's theories have merely been framed to suit his creative abilities; if so, the latter were certainly not by when they were measured, for a worse fit we do not remember to have seen. A great deal of this music is as excessive and needlessly luxurious in mere loudness and meretriciousness of sound, as the unhappy dancers whom he castigates so unmercifully are in show; and it assuredly contains as much that is "unnecessary" and "customary" as any modern production with which we are acquainted.

Herr Wagner, however, condemns his own music more than we

are disposed to do; for, as we have said, it has very great merit in respect of instrumentation, and is also highly dramatic in character and expressive of the words and action it is meant to illustrate. Strikingly original, however—like, for instance, that of Berlioz—it most certainly is not.

The best part of this selection was the introduction, the clear and beautiful scoring of which betokens an amount of strictly musical "knowledge," and mere "science" which we cannot but wonder the author of the "Kunst-werk der Zukunft" ever condescended to acquire. But Herr Wagner has deigned to learn even more than this, for we understand that he knows the scores of the great though erroneous masters by heart, and can direct a rehearsal of their "progressive" works perfectly well without referring to them. The selection from "Lohengrin" was most admirably executed—wonderfully, indeed, considering the few rehearsals allotted to it—very favourably received by a highly critical and, we may add, somewhat prejudiced audience, and left the impression, at least upon us, that Herr Wagner is a very clever though not a great composer. We have now only space to say, that Beethoven's noble symphony (a most poetical analysis of which was furnished from the literary works of the conductor) was, on the whole, very finely performed, and brought this very interesting concert to a worthy conclusion. The rooms were crowded.

If Glover had pushed his "veering" no farther than that, Wagner might have rested fairly content; on the whole, one can but deem the criticism a favourable one. As the spirit of opposition grew, however, under the constant provocation of those New York imbecilities, the *Morning Post* almost boxed the compass in time.—Pass to the *Sunday Times* Apr. 1, and see the singular divergence of opinion between these two neutrals as to the control Wagner had obtained over his band.

Great interest had been excited by the announcement of a selection from Herr Wagner's opera *Lohengrin*, and the audience was extremely numerous in consequence. . [*Programme*] . . The overture to *Der Freischütz*, intimately known as it is to the London orchestras—and, as on Monday evening, in the hands of players who for execution, vigour and precision, are not surpassed in Europe—ought in its performance to have been a matter of absolute certainty. Yet, owing to the unusual readings adopted in several instances by the conductor, and the incomplete understanding still existing between him and his orchestra, it was too frequently disfigured by spots of straggling and unsatisfactory effect. Herr Wagner's opinion of the *tempo* in this composition certainly differs from that here usually received; as,

for instance, he takes the first movement considerably slower than we are accustomed to hear it. Moreover he has somewhat of a wilful and capricious style, manifested by sudden [?] slackening of speed at the entry of a *cantabile* phrase, and as sudden [?] acceleration on its disappearance. But this is no reason why he should not have his way, no excuse for the orchestra not strictly following him, more especially since the music was perfectly familiar to them, and the indications of the *baton* were far less fidgetty than at the first concert. The fact seems to be, that the Philharmonic orchestra and their conductor are at variance as to first principles. Herr Wagner's theory evidently is—and we think it the correct one—that a conductor occupies in his orchestra the position of a pianist at his instrument, not merely that he should set it and keep it metronomically in motion, but that he should wield its energies in unison with his own impulse—that he should retard here and accelerate there, and call forth either a whisper or a thunder-clap as his feeling of the instant suggests. He should command, in short, unlimited identification of himself with his band, and take all critical consequences. This is, undoubtedly, the true theory of orchestra direction, and all unused to it as we are in England, there can be no difficulty in its realisation where perfect knowledge commands, and perfect discipline obeys. The Philharmonic orchestra, on the other hand, believes itself so thoroughly master of the times and styles of all instrumental music, that any attempt at instruction in these matters must be supererogatory, not to say impertinent. It does not positively refuse obedience to Herr Wagner, but yields it unwillingly and carelessly. To no one, indeed, has this body of instrumentalists been otherwise than intractable, save only to Mr Costa, who—though we shall always think him in other respects unfit for Philharmonic office—certainly maintained a very creditable state of discipline. Even Mendelssohn, before whose greatness, we should have thought, any set of men might have bowed without loss of dignity, and who might be excused for supposing that he and Germany together had some small insight into Beethoven's symphonies, met with all manner of obstacles, and not a few insults, in his endeavour to show this orchestra that in such places as Leipsic and Dresden there were traditions [?] of these matters, not then promulgated in Hanover-square. All this style of thing is very unwise, since it answers to no end save that of making music go badly. We are not now pleading for the adoption of any of Herr Wagner's peculiar fancies of reading. We only insist that, appointed conductor, he should have unfettered control; that he should be implicitly followed, lead where he may. The music would, at least, be correctly executed, and on his shoulders would rest the whole blame or praise of his innovations. Thanks to a silly state of cross-purposes, however, there were several occasions on

Monday evening when a stranger must have been forced into one or both of two very false conclusions—namely, that Herr Wagner cannot conduct, and the Philharmonic cannot play.

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony met with a very unequal performance—in some parts, beneath the reputation of the orchestra, and in others, quite equal to the merit of the music. The first movement was delivered with unimpeachable vigour, yet by no means with the perfection of *ensemble* we have heard on some other occasions. The *scherzo* was a marvellous feat of execution. Taken at topmost speed, there was not an equivocal point from first to last. It was, indeed, worthy of any orchestra, and was probably never surpassed. The lovely *adagio* was evidently played under restraint throughout. The unusually slow speed at which it was taken evidently sat uncomfortably on the inclinations of the orchestra, and this effect increased with the progress of the variations of which this movement mainly consists. The instrumental introduction to the vocal portion of the work, again, was by no means neatly executed. The basses, charged with the utterance of the ponderous recitatives which preface the exquisite melody on which all the subsequent portion of the work is founded, seemed ill at ease with the duty assigned to them, and made sundry breaches in that unity of effect which, to say the least, is desirable. Once fairly launched, however, the vocal part of the work went off as admirably as could be expected, with music so nearly impracticable for voices as this, unfortunately, is. The singers were Mesdames Weiss and Lockey, and Messrs Lockey and Weiss, and to them and the chorus much credit is due for the manner in which they discharged some of the most arduous duties vocalists are ever called on to undertake. On the whole, this rendering of the Choral Symphony was inferior in exactness to others we remember, and notably so by comparison with that extraordinary performance during the first season of the New Philharmonic Concerts under the direction of Berlioz. Yet, it would be unfair to ascribe the blemishes, on Monday evening, wholly either to the conductor or the orchestra. Except the unusually slow pace of the *adagio* already mentioned, and a very sudden, odd, and unmeaning hurrying of the time during a phrase of four bars for the wind instruments in the second part of the first movement, there was nothing sufficiently peculiar in the reading of this symphony to discompose an orchestra accustomed to the ordinary style of its performance. The truth is, that Herr Wagner's mode of conducting is not the clearest in the world, and the orchestra makes too little attempt to mend the matter by that determination to comprehend him which is due to his position and reputation.

Henry Smart's critique—the most interesting, to my mind, of all contemporary documents—has by no means ended yet; but I

must arrest its flow a moment, to call attention to two facts: 1°, that he is writing with next door to personal knowledge when he speaks of the "intractableness" of the Philharmonic band, for *Grove* informs us that his uncle Sir George "in 1813 was chosen one of the original members of the Philharmonic Society, and between that date and 1844 conducted 49 of its concerts"; 2°, that Berlioz held seven rehearsals of the Choral symphony in 1852 (with a professional chorus, too), conducted it *twice*, and therefore had opportunities denied to Wagner, viz. of *thoroughly* training his performers, to say nothing of the greater amenableness of a band with no forty-year prestige behind it.—H. Smart shall now proceed, though considerations of space enforce omission of a few very thoughtful, and a few quite poetic reflections from his critique:—

The Philharmonic Society has done good service to music in general, by affording Herr Wagner a proper opportunity for the proof of his strength as a composer. He is the present disturber of the musical peace of Europe. Until lately, every hard bone of contention seemed quietly disposed of; Beethoven's posthumous works were in process of digestion; Mendelssohn had conquered his road to the Pantheon of immortalities; and even the fierceness of classical rage against Berlioz had subsided into leaving him to his own devices and the affections of those who would accept him. In the midst of this tranquillity, however, a strong party has arisen in Germany, to propagate the doctrines of Richard Wagner, and a controversy some seven times hotter than any of yore has been the consequence. The antagonists, in this discussion, know no measure for their zeal. Nothing can exceed the exaggeration of praise on the one side, unless it be that of detraction on the other. . . . To live within ear-shot of this tumult, and yet to have no positive evidence as to its merits, is, for the English musician, a very unsatisfactory condition. If he thinks at all, he cannot believe in the finality of art. Even less can he believe its ultimate perfection now attained. Who, then, is to identify himself with the next epoch in its grand history? Who is to begin where Beethoven finished with his Mass in D minor? . . . Somebody must—somebody *will*. Why not Richard Wagner? The opposition he has provoked goes for nothing. The English musician will remember that, but a few short years ago, in the very same room wherein he heard the *Lohengrin* pieces received with attention, respect and applause, the symphonies of Beethoven were habitually treated as the hazy effusions of insanity! What, also, about Wagner's reputed abnegation of recognised forms, and his vagueness? Forms have altered before, and may change again. What man creates, he

may also destroy. And vagueness, too, that fearful art-reproach to the timid! Who shall say that vagueness is not an important element of sublimity? In nature it certainly is. . . . Who that ever took pencil in hand was so vague—to the eye at least—as Turner? Was not Beethoven's career, from the *Eroica* onwards, one perpetual aim at the vast, the infinite, the uncomprehended?

There is nothing, then, in these general charges against Wagner to discredit the testimony of his advocates. At least, we might safely conclude it next to impossible that one half of Germany had gone mad about nothing. The thing needed was some practical warranty for the fuss made about the greatness or smallness of the matter in dispute. To this end, the half hour's demonstration on Monday evening was worth a year of *pros* and *cons* in the German journals. The test we have a right to suppose perfectly fair, within the prescribed limits. The composer personally directed the performance, and he would not, obviously, have selected his least-esteemed specimens wherewith to make his first impression in London. We have heard, then, what there was to hear of the *Lohengrin*, and are perfectly satisfied that, as in most such cases, there is much error on both sides of the dispute, as to this music in general. In the first place, Richard Wagner is, beyond doubt, a man of genius. He is a poet, in the broad and generic application of the term, and therefore an artist, sentiently, in everything; but it by no means follows that music has been wisely chosen for the development of his gift. To some mistake or accident of this kind only, seems attributable the extreme rarity of absolutely first-class men in any of the arts. The artist element—poetic feeling—is the same for all. Poetry, music, painting, sculpture, are but varying manifestations of the one divine spirit. Yet it is quite possible for a man, while right as to the broad purpose of his mission, to mistake the implements of its announcement. Thus Phidias might have taken to composing symphonies. . . . Wagner is, we verily believe, a chosen vessel of the sacred fire; but we can in no way satisfy ourselves that music is, in his case, its appropriate form of utterance. He is evidently full of great and profound feelings, of vast and dreamy mind-pictures struggling to acquire material vitality. Yet when he seeks to realise these in music, we feel at once that we have but a faint shadowing of his imaginings—that the tongue he has chosen is all but dumb for his purposes. We have not a word to say of his vagueness or rejection of ordinary forms; in art, all things are justified by their result. Our complaint against his music is that it does not evince the faculty of *creating beauty*. . . . While he keeps in cloud and mystery, those who will dream with him may recognise his power. His weakness increases with his approach to earth and reality. If he gives us a tangible phrase, it is not beautiful; if he makes trial of a familiar

tune, it is common-place to the very threshold of vulgarity. If, then, as asserted for him, Richard Wagner is to take up the thread of art where Beethoven left it, it can only be by, not the expansion, but the total subversion of the world's ideas of music. The great composers have left behind them imperishable traits of melody, which will haunt men's memories to the end of time. . . . Wagner does not—cannot, we believe—produce these things; and therefore—no matter his inward consciousness of genius—he has mistaken his mission.

. . [Description of *Lohengrin* prelude] . . This is an instance of effect by colour alone, and without form or rhythm. It is conceived in a highly poetic spirit, and, as far as such music-painting can be so, is certainly successful. But it is unfortunate for this "music of the future," that this first specimen is by no means new. Berlioz long since commenced all this style of effect; he has repeatedly done the same kind of thing, but more perfectly. Félicien David, too, has employed nearly similar means, and with quite equal result, for his description of sunrise in the "Desert" symphony. The "Bridal Procession," for at least three parts of its length, fails from want of any distinct character. The chorus, which accompanies it, is sombre and without musical interest; and, indeed, the only redeeming feature of the piece is the crescendo with which it terminates—again solely a matter of colour—and which introduces the full force of the orchestra with powerful effect. The march-movement [i.e. Entr'acte!], which prefaces the "Epithalamium," is characteristic, but somewhat rugged and uncouth. Here, for the first time, we come across a tangible melodic point. It is a figure for the basses, afterwards reinforced by the trombones, and supported by a powerful iteration of the violins in triplets. It stands out in isolated prominence by its character of rhythmic decision, yet, beyond this, is nowise remarkable for merit or originality. The "Epithalamium" [Bridal chorus] is decidedly the weakest portion of the selection, and may well be quoted as evidence of the composer's poverty in melodic idea. There was no escape in this instance from the necessity of tangible, rhythmic figure, and the only result Wagner has been able to command is a tune—if it may be so called—of the most utterly common-place description. With a return to the march, this scene is supposed to close; so, at least, terminated this selection from the *Lohengrin*.

We do not yet imagine ourselves to have made complete acquaintance with Richard Wagner's peculiarities; but it is, at least, fair to suppose that the selection on Monday evening was favourably made, and if so, its result was anything but satisfactory. Any largely disputed matter of art deserves all the help that can be afforded towards a decision; and on this ground, the Philharmonic directors have done well and wisely. Nor should they stop the course of justice here. If Wagner has not yet shown us his best works, by all means give him the oppor-

tunity to do so. Meanwhile Liszt and the romancists of Germany may rest assured that it will prove very difficult to blind English musicians by the metaphysical dust they so plentifully scatter broadcast at home. Art-education is here too solidly founded on practical acquaintance with everything great in music, lightly to suffer a disturbance of its convictions. Wonders, according to the old adage, never cease; yet we think it will require more than a miraculous amount of Teutonic journalism to establish Richard Wagner as the legitimate successor of Beethoven.

The peculiar value of the above resides in its expression of the opinion of the average 'native talent' of the day, of the good English musician not doggedly opposed to Wagner, but unwilling to yield himself to the new impression until he be personally convinced of its excellence. We have just heard Wagner himself deplore the impossibility of giving such people a fair idea of his works from these "sample snips"—and at one hearing too! Surely there would have been nothing derogatory to his position, if Parallax had sought out Henry Smart, and presented him to the composer of these snips, a composer whom Smart at once had recognised as "poet." Was there not Klindworth at hand, to help initiate him into the deeper mysteries of this music? I can scarcely imagine that Smart would have left Portland Terrace after a hearing of the third act of *Lohengrin*, or the first act of *Die Walküre*, without being seized by the magic of those works. And there were other links, too, for establishment of a hearty feeling of friendship. It was in the house of Smart's uncle that Weber had died, in 1826; and in the future, so *Grove* says, "It was mainly by the exertions of Sir George Smart and Sir Julius Benedict that the statue of Weber at Dresden was erected, the greater part of the subscriptions having been collected in England." We have seen that, on *his* side of the water, it was mainly by the exertions of Wagner that Weber's remains were removed thither. Max von Weber came to London "to carry out the necessary arrangements"—as we know; if there is the smallest truth in the statement of *As I knew*, "He came in June, 1844, and was the guest of Edward Roeckel. We met daily. Max von Weber was a bright, intelligent man. Enthusiastic for the cause, I accompanied him everywhere, soliciting subscriptions from compatriots in this country and interviewing the authorities to facilitate the removal," —if there is a grain of truth in that, Praeger must have known

that a bond of union subsisted already, however unconsciously, between Wagner and the Smarts.*

Instead of striving his utmost to rivet that forgotten bond still closer, P. actually inserts the following in his next news-letter to America: "A new opera by H. Smart is in promise. We shall hear it and see whether H. Smart has any more pretensions to fame than that of being a nephew of Sir George Smart, who again dates his celebrity from one noisy evening at court, where reeling royalty indulged in playing ball with knighthoods, one of which most innocently hit the good old gentleman, and made him what he is—'a Sir!'" Davison of course reproduced that, in the *M. Wd* of June 9, '*con molto gusto*' and with a stinging reproof: "Mr Henry Smart and his new opera are dealt a little fillip in advance, which little fillip is accompanied by a gross insult levelled at Mr Smart's uncle, the excellent and universally-esteemed Sir George: —[*quotes*]. Sir George was a *young* man when he was knighted! We assisted at the first performance of Mr Smart's opera [*Bertha*]; and so of course did 'Drei Sterner'; but he was 'again' *invisible*. The Yankee editor will have a notice of the performance, however, for all that." Certainly, that unprovoked attack on his aged uncle could scarcely reach the nephew's *eyes* till some three weeks before Wagner's departure, yet it is impossible but that a little of Dreisterner's 'tongue' should have reached his *ears* in the interval, and a growing spirit of hostility to the man who mixed with such an advocate is to be detected in the *Sunday Times* from the month of May onward; whereas a little tact might have easily secured in Henry Smart a sterling friend.

Chorley, as said, was irreclaimable from the first. Of

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* Perhaps there is a glimmering of the indirect connection between Wagner and Sir George to be found in P.'s as yet uncorroborated tale about the *Rule Britannia* overture (first performed in London Jan. 2, 1905): "This he sent to Sir George Smart, one of the most prominent of English musicians, justly appreciated, among other things, for having introduced Mendelssohn's 'Elijah' to England at the Liverpool festival of 1836. When Wagner related this incident to me in 1855, on his visit to London, he said that, having received no reply, he inquired and ascertained that the score seemed to have been insufficiently prepaid for transmission, and that Sir George Smart had refused to pay the balance, 'and for all I know,' continued Wagner, 'it must still be lying in the dead-letter office'"—which, of course, it never occurred to P. to hunt up at the time! How the overture found its way to Leicester, where it was discovered in 1904, is still a mystery.

his long tirade in the *Athenæum* of March 31 I shall quote about one half:—

It was to be perceived that the newcomer's predilections lean towards music *alla fantasia*, from his handling of the bâton during the overture—which was *encored*—and the Symphony; and his reading [of which?] may be credited with a certain coarse and overstrained enthusiasm. To impress this on the orchestra, that precision to which the band (with all its imperfections) had been wrought during later years, has been already sacrificed. A case of more discreditable scrambling through well-known music—period and place considered—is not in our recollection. The accompaniment, too, to Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto*, played by Mr Blagrove, was positively bad, in spite of the affectation of care given by the withdrawal of the *ripieni* instruments from the *solos*. In the dashing disrespect, however, with which this masterpiece of music was treated, Herr Wagner was self-consistent. He has, as a critic (unless we mistake) "finished up" Mendelssohn, having described him as a man "who, having nothing to say, said it elegantly."* As a transcendental conductor—having nothing to do with such music—he did that nothing with due bustle and pretension.

Besides appearing as conductor and critic [Beethoven programme] on Monday evening, Herr Wagner also produced himself as a composer. Some fragments from his last, and we think, his best, opera were performed. . . . So far as we can recollect, these are about the only movements (belonging to 'Lohengrin,' which is a long opera) in which there is even a pretext of melody—as melody was understood before it was "emancipated" by these men of the future, and its existence asserted [?] to be independent of form, rhythm or beauty. In no. 1 [Prelude], the idea, if idea it be, recalls a phrase used by Weber in 'Euryanthe,' and another by Halévy in his 'Guido.' This is dressed out by a division of the violins and the employment of them at the *altissimo* notes of the scale, so as to produce an impression of singularity rather than sublimity. Thus, also, M. Félicien David and (in his 'Attila') Signor Verdi have described dawn effects by the orchestra; thus M. Jullien has, more than once, fitted out a sunrise for one of his descriptive Quadrilles, previously to the bursting out, in all their glory, of the orb of day and of the conductor's luminous smile. Employing a like principle, it would not be difficult to paint a night-picture or a descent of *Proserpine* into the lower regions, for any

* Another sign of the effect of Dreisterner's disclosure. Chorley—who shews, by his "unless we mistake," that he hitherto had known the article more positively than its authorship—is paraphrasing *Judaism in Music*; cf. *Prose Works* III. 95.

maestro who had courage to use the deepest notes of united *viole* and *violoncelli* for one hundred bars; * but (as the Irish Lady asked concerning the *Torso*) "where are the features?" The name of the *Saint Graal* and the angels, nearly as good as "the mobled queen" in 'Hamlet,' and the length of such an unrelieved piece of monotony, apparently impressed a part of the audience with the idea that the Introduction was celestial and new, and they applauded it accordingly [Out of the mouth of babes, etc.]. No. 2, to our thinking, which better merited favour, pleased less. In this wedding music, a certain dignity is to be recognised; though no tone of festivity, no bridal tone. Herr Wagner has, nevertheless, tried as hard for musical climax [why not?] as though he was [!] one of the wicked effect-makers on whose destruction he is bent—and to obtain it, he has used his voices as arbitrarily as the most conventional copyist of the Rossinian *crescendo*. On what principle of dramatic truth are all the female singers kept still so long, when a bride is in the case [because they are *in* the procession], merely that they may bring up the *cortège* with a few bars at last—a sort of "trot for the avenue"? And yet somehow the climax comes to nothing. The magic cauldron bubbles, but does not boil. The effect, to attain which the writer has stooped so low (trying him by his own canons), never arrives [!]. In this music again, Herr Wagner's acute fancies of scoring give the ear more pain than pleasure.—No. 3, the *entr'acte* is (as we have heretofore said) the best page in the opera,—but the *Epithalamium*, as an accomplished musician remarked to us, is as petty and pretty a tune of short phrases, as if M. Adam had flung it off for the opera-wedding of some Trianon Jocrisse with some Toinette of Marly. Dr Liszt or Herr Wagner would be sadly puzzled to prove the propriety or truth of such a piece of common-place at nuptials so sublime, told by a poet so mystical in his meanings.—It is true that the episodical strophe sung by eight ladies, "while the sumptuous robes of Lohengrin and Alice are taken off by their attendants," is symphonized by certain pizzicati,—and these may possibly represent the withdrawal of the diamond pins; but as a whole, the chorus is small to silliness. . . . Except, in short, for the stir which has been made in the matter, and the empiricism with which the music was recommended in the *programme*, these specimens of "composition for the future" would hardly have been worth a line of analysis for any intrinsic novelty or merit they possess. . . .

The *Times* had no report on the concert of March 26. Says Wagner to Otto (Apr. 5): "Davison's invective seems to have been too strong and coarse for the editoriate of the *Times* itself; wherefore it is said not to have accepted his report on the second

* Is this indirect *knowledge* (per Weimar), or mere prophecy, of *Rheingold?*

concert. It is just possible that this unexpected occurrence may restore a little courage to the other papers next time, and a movement in my favour be observable again. In that way, and with continued kindliness of the audience proper, possibly everything may turn in my favour at last; to which some manœuvre or other of the Philharmonic itself—which is fighting for its very existence—might contribute much. Possibly, therefore, you may yet be right in saying, 'I told you so. That's the way of the world, and so, you see, you come to recognition in the end!'—All's possible: but I—? What object have I with it all? The conducting of symphonies—which, to be candid, I made my métier at Zurich only by way of exception and to please yourselves—and what besides? The Tannhäuser-march and an overture of mine? And after??—Oh, it's fine."

Was it a mere inference of Praeger's, or an assumption of Benecke's, that Davison had thus been muzzled by his *Times* editor? It will be remembered that this is the letter in which Wagner speaks of the probability of Benecke's "manipulating" the press (p. 198 *sup.*), and it is just within the bounds of possibility that a muzzle *had* been put on Davison through his influence; for the *Times* has no account of the third concert either. But it is far more likely that these two reports of D.'s were simply 'crowded out,' otherwise we should not find him returning to the charge at the fourth and remaining concerts, and in precisely the same tone as at the first. In any case it would be a foolish thing to attempt, as Davison had full and unfettered control of his own journal, the *Musical World*. Here he indulged March 31 in a more than two-column leader and a two-column report—not to reckon the closing *Reactionary* (rather extolling Wagner, by the way, at the expense of Berlioz). Curiously enough, though, Davison is not particularly bloodthirsty in either of these articles. In his leader he even goes the length of calling Wagner "a poet, and by all accounts a true one," albeit he does ask, "Is Herr Wagner himself a myth?—or has he mistaken his vocation?" (somewhat in the manner of Smart). This leader is really very tame for Davison, as fairly represented by the following extract:—

To wrench fragments of harmony and melody from such a work—a work written to establish the inseparability of the arts—was scarcely wise in the Philharmonic directors to suggest, or in Herr Wagner to permit. It was like giving you bits of egg-shell for breakfast, instead

of "the whole" egg—since, without cracking metaphor, Herr Wagner's music, to his drama, may be figured as the shell to the egg, or at least as the albumen to the yolk. But the most provoking enigma was offered in the music itself. This was a shell at the best—an egg-shell, without a taste of egg, and no salt to give it a relish. Except a slow instrumental movement, describing the descent of the "Holy Graal," in which the composer hovers and flits for an indefinite space round and about the key of A, like Senora Nena with the hat at the Haymarket, and which—though arranged for the orchestra with great felicity, somewhat in the manner of M. Hector Berlioz—has no definable phrase or rhythm, little else, in short, but a sort of dull continuity, there was nothing in the selection that might not have passed muster very well for music of the *past*, or, at least, of the present. It was, so to say, as simple as a hammer, a kind of Nym's music—and that was "the humour of it." The second piece—a prelude and chorus in E flat, the music accompanying the bridal procession—would be unexceptionable, but for the odd notion of beginning the chorus a semitone higher than the original key, with no apparent object whatever. The "Wedding Music and Epithalamium," consisting of a noisy instrumental movement, "*alla marcia*," in G, followed by a chorus in B flat—the leading tunes in either of which might be attributed to M. Adolphe Adam, "of the Institute," but for a certain progression, more startling than agreeable, from E major to A flat, through F minor and D flat, which is a cut above the composer of the *Postillon de Lonjumeau*—and a repetition of the "*alla marcia*," made up the quantity of "Music of the Future" to which the Philharmonic subscribers were favoured on the present occasion. Now, if there was nothing more mysterious, incoherent, abstruse, and "tone-defying" than all this in *Lohengrin*, we should be inclined to look upon the future art-doctrine as a hoax. Happily, the scores of Herr Wagner's operas have made their way to England [for pirating], and those who have perused them are well aware that the fragments which, in their wisdom, the directors of the Philharmonic Society thought expedient to place before the public as examples of their new conductor's music, constituted nearly all that it was possible to disentangle from the dreary labyrinth of accompanied recitative that make[s] up the rest of *Lohengrin*. As it was, the public had no opportunity of speculating on the successful revolt against keys and their relations, by which Herr Wagner has illustrated one of his most furious dogmas. . . .

Again the ogre is almost a pleasant sort of beast, though baffled in his hope of a meal off that continentally misnomered "*Music* of the Future." It surely cannot have been excess of "invective" that kept his report out of the *Times*. True, we have

not yet had his judgment passed on the conducting of this second concert; but that itself, in the *M. Wd's* smaller-type report, is by no means sweeping. After remarking that the concert "drew a very large attendance"—to which his previous sallies no doubt contributed—Davison begins "by saying that the band has not yet learnt to comprehend—or, at least, does not appear to be over ready and eager to follow with that undeviating attention indispensable to a good performance—the motions of Herr Wagner's bâton." He next finds that the *Freischütz* overture "did not go with quite as much precision as was desirable. Much of Herr Wagner's expression is decidedly poetical, nearly all of it is original, and has a presumptive meaning; but he takes far too many liberties." There was no "warrant in 'tradition' (to say nothing of effect)"—D. thinks—"for taking the opening movement in Weber's overture as slow as though it formed part of a burial service; still less for gradually diminishing the *fortissimo* in the two sustained chords that introduce the *coda;* least of all, for weakening the force of that animated climax by suspending the '*piu mosso,*' or increased rapidity, until after the first four bars. These 'readings' are *new*, but they are not good. Others were more to the purpose, and the overture was encored." Whatever we may think of D.'s judgment, his facts are indisputable here, for he singles out the very 'readings' on which Wagner himself will lay stress in his *Conducting* essay some fourteen years later; and if any student wished to supplement that essay by a list of Wagner's readings of some other works, he would find in a collation of these criticisms of the *M. World* with those of the *Morning Post* and *Sunday Times* a most valuable record, so far as *facts* go.

As for the Ninth Symphony, "which has never yet gone entirely well at the Philharmonic concerts," D. finds that "in some respects it never went so loosely as on the present occasion. The first movement was all 'higgledy piggledy' . . . About Herr Wagner's peculiar notions of this sublime movement, and of the manner in which it should be played, we cannot pretend to offer an opinion; since, whatever may have been his intentions, they were by no means carried out. The *scherzo* was quite another affair; the reading was the best we ever heard, and the execution almost perfect. The performance, indeed, of this extraordinary inspiration was gratifying from first to last. We cannot say so much for

the slow movement . . impaired by the almost creeping pace adopted . . broken and interrupted by 'rallentandos' . . . The expedient of slackening the time is used by Herr Wagner with singular capriciousness, and to an excess that passes the limits of ordinary exaggeration. In this respect he becomes, at intervals, rather a tormentor than a conductor of the band. . . . In the choral part of the Ninth Symphony, which never hung well together, Herr Wagner gave glimpses of an elevated and intellectual conception; but they were only glimpses, since the realization was not there; the players and singers [cf. to Fischer, "chorus miserable"] were not to the conductor—which should always be the case—as the act to the will, the instant and faithful accomplishment of his thought . . . At present there is not enough [familiarity] between Herr Wagner's *bâton* and the combined intelligence of the Philharmonic fiddlers. Time, however, works wonders . . . We shall see, before the season is over, whether Herr Wagner is to be styled the conductor, as well as composer, 'for the future.' There is no chapter on that head in 'the books'" (that chapter came later, as said).

Again summing all of these criticisms with the exception of implacable Chorley's, one would say that, a month from his arrival, the outlook for Wagner in this country was rather promising than otherwise. If points are objected to by some of the critics, other points are highly praised, and to have won from ogre Davison such a tribute as "the reading of Beethoven's *scherzo* was the best we ever heard" may be described as a triumph. The least overture on the newcomer's side might have turned a partial into a complete success—and changed his whole future career. But with a cicerone who kept representing his own former associates as nothing but a "pack of blackguards," or a "gang of Jews," such overtures of course were not attempted. And Praeger did worse than that; he made mischief all round. He has not immortalised his own report upon that second concert, but we have heard him say, "it was a difficult and delicate matter to prevent friction between Richard Wagner on the one hand, and the steady-going time-serving directors on the other." Here is his idea of a delicate prevention of friction, luckily embalmed for us by Davison's foresight:—

"In the last number of the Yankee sheet," says the *M. Wd* of

May 12, "appears another bombastic letter with the signature of *** ('*Drei-Sterner*'), in which Herr Wagner is again extolled to the skies, and all the rest of the world abused at his expense. From this we shall make some quotations. To begin:—'On Monday last, Richard Wagner made his second appearance in the orchestra of the Old Philharmonic. By the express desire of the directors (at all events, some of them) a selection from *Lohengrin* was given. The uninitiated may infer that this was to shew their enthusiasm for their conductor; but I assert boldly, that it was done with the view of securing a *fiasco* for Wagner.'—This is odd, to say the least of it. The Philharmonic Directors have gone to considerable pains and expense to bring a conductor all the way from Zurich, and their object, in bringing his works before the public, is to 'secure him a *fiasco!*' They might have got a '*fiasco*,' easy enough, had they applied to the Hamm professor, who has composed a good deal, and would, doubtless, not mind conducting some of his music (is *that*, too, of the 'Future'?) at the Philharmonic. But the context is still more inexplicable:—'Nothing is more generally known than the decided detestation in which Wagner is held by the musical critic of the ——, the reason of which we have given before. If we add to that the influence from Paris in the same direction; if we name Brandus and Meyerbeer, we think we have said enough to show the *knowing* which way *la pirouette* turns. To him who does not know, we advise a few years' stay at the capital of *esprit* and *intrigue*, and the earnest perusal of Macchiavelli's works; *then* he will understand us.'—We have been to Paris, and have read Macchiavelli—not in Paris, but at home . . . Yet, for the life of us, we cannot trace the connection between the critic of the —— and the Philharmonic Society, nor guess on what grounds the directors of that institution, to oblige a gentleman who has occasionally rated them with more sincerity than kindness, should endeavour to 'secure a *fiasco*' for the new conductor, whose appointment he has found it right to condemn! The rest of the article on the Philharmonic concert is an expression of the writer's own opinions, which are not worth discussing:—'However, the selection from *Lohengrin* did not make the *fiasco* expected, which was to bring a "native" into Signor Costa's place; on the contrary, the astonishment of the connoisseurs,'" etc.,—the four singers and the violin-soloist being treated to the tail of P.'s contempt.

Could anything be madder than this setting of everybody by the ears, on which Dreisterner Parallax was secretly engaged? And I "advisedly" say secretly, as these articles were flung across the ocean without a proper signature. With all their insinuations about reputable London critics being in the pay of Meyerbeer and his publisher, must not those critics jump at once to the conclusion that this Dreisterner was a mere hireling of Wagner's?—unhappy Wagner, who can never have been afforded more than a varnished account of them. Hear what he says as to the *Neue Zeitschrift* reproduction of part of a letter of his own (no. 44 to Fischer, June 15): "If I had wanted to express myself in public about the London mess, no doubt I should have done it somewhat differently; but I neither had, nor have the smallest wish to do so" (to P., July 7). And still more to the point: "Make yourself as merry as you can, meanwhile, with your polemics against London musical artists and critics; not for my sake, though, but just because I fancy it's a sort of safety-valve to you" (to P., Sept. 14). I do not believe Wagner *saw* one line of these Anglo-American screeds, even after their printing; that he had no privity in them before their despatch, is absolutely proved by this instance: far from suspecting, with the mischief-maker, that the Philharmonic directors were engaged in a suicidal intrigue against him, we have just heard him anticipate "some manœuvre or other" on their part in his favour. Can he have let drop that *word* in Praeger's presence? It is possible; this perennial magpie had a matchless talent for laying hold of the wrong end of the stick, regardless of consequences.

Oddly enough, another illustration is afforded by that same letter of Apr. 5 to Otto. In *As* we read, "Wagner was greatly amused at the references to him in the London Charivari 'Punch,' wherein his 'music of the future' was described as 'Promissory Notes,' and on a second occasion when it was asserted that 'Lord John Russell is in treaty with Dr Wagner to compose some music of the future for his Reform Bill.'" The second joke—so feeble that even Davison begs his readers for enlightenment—did not appear in *Punch* till July 28, a month after Wagner's departure, therefore *cannot* have been brought to his notice in London (needless to say, it is not referred to in his letters). The first, when his attention was drawn to it from Switzerland, came as an unpleasant surprise to him, as Praeger

must have learnt to his cost. Here it is, from *Punch* March 31: "*A Wag on Wagner.*—We do not know what Herr Wagner's new musical theory may consist of, but we should say that 'the Music of the Future' must be composed principally of 'Promissory Notes,' made payable at two, three, or six months after date." The jest would be blatantly inhospitable in any circumstances—quite unlike *Punch's* traditional style*—but acquires a more sinister aspect from the fuller reference to it now published in the new German edition of the letters to Otto. Here at last we see its sting, and it is impossible not to exclaim, A companion hath done this thing. How little "amusement" it caused to unsuspicious Wagner, may be gathered from the commencement of that letter of April 5:—

"I don't know what may be the meaning of 'Punch's' joke, but can assure you I have taken up no money on note of hand. On the contrary, after the second concert Mr Anderson called on Sainton, to ask if he knew how they were to proceed about my fee; whereon S. answered him: 'How should I know? faites ce que vous voulez.' Upon that Mr Anderson sent me a cheque for £50, as fee for the first two concerts, which I cashed at once and expect to manage with for a long while yet. [Now comes the newly-published part—down to "told you above"]. At the beginning, with the deferment of other receipts, when I learnt that honoraria like mine are not usually paid until the end, I was uneasy as to how I should keep my wife going for the time of my absence; so I asked Praeger if—as I should be very loth to approach the directors for money—he perhaps might be able to

* June 2, '55, *Punch* has something similar; poking fun at the phrase "consented *to lend* the Directors her invaluable services," as applied to Grisi, it remarks, "How different to the mercenary feeling as displayed by one Wagner, who laid down the bold axiom that 'England was to be valued only for its money'"—the strict application whereof, however, is to Richard's eldest brother Albert (cf vol. iv). *Punch* indulges in two further spasms July 7: 1°, apropos of the decay of the Old Philharmonic, "the constitution was threatening to break up, when Dr Wagner was called in as a desperate resource; but under his hands the patient became rapidly worse and now lies in an insensible state with little hope of recovery"; 2°, "WAGNER'S HERO.—The best singer of the *Music of the Future* is MR. SEMI-BREEVES, for whenever he is advertised to sing a song, it is sure to be postponed indefinitely to some future period." The last quite distinctly resembles the touch of a gentleman we have already found disparaging the English tenor for America's diversion (cf. p. 156 *sup.*).

obtain me the sum in advance, on his security and through his banker, which he represented to me as not impossible. Meanwhile, however, I had occasion to demand an advance of 100 louis from the Berlin Intendant, for Tannhäuser, and even good hope at last that this advance would be accorded me; for the latter event I assigned this money to Sulzer [cf iv, 354-6], and was so eased by this prospect that I did not speak again to Praeger about my first proposal. Finally, Sulzer has also assured me that he had arranged for my wife's provision with the needful in any case, and likewise advised me not to take that step. Consequently there has been no further enquiry of any kind on my side, and you know all the rest through what I've told you above.—So 'Punch's' meaning need disturb you as little as it affects myself. For that matter, nobody here has said a word to me about it yet, neither had I read it myself; should I happen to discover the drift of it, I'll let you know."

Wagner neither returns to the subject, nor mentions Praeger's name again in any of his published letters to Otto, though it is more than probable that another is missing between this and that of May 22. So we are left to our own conclusions from the coincidence that *Punch* should have been supplied with its jokelet just a day or two after the Philharmonic treasurer had removed the last pretext for "promissory notes." Who else could be the originator of the sorry jest, than the man who alone (beyond his banker) knew the proposal on which it so plainly is based? Some two years later Wagner did in fact obtain a trifling loan from Praeger (£5)—after P. had been *his* guest, and at a time of complications elsewhere dealt with—but in London, as the above distinctly shews, it never passed the stage of a preliminary chat. Yet, after telling us English that in London "Berlioz was poor, had been compelled to resort to pledging trinkets, etc., whereby to live" (*As*, 263—is it true of '55?), Praeger informs his Germans in continuation: "I was fortunately in the position to obviate this in Wagner's case, since my means allowed me to help him along till the Philharmonic payment fell due" (*Wie*, 278). He had done nothing of the kind, as seen; it had not been needed. Still less likelihood of truth is there in what he had said over a hundred pages earlier: "A brother of mine, passing through Dresden in 1847, wrote to me of his surprise at the state of Wagner's finances, and of the sum that was necessary

to keep him afloat, which under my direction was immediately supplied" (*As*, 149*). To use a favoured expression of P.'s own, *Credat Judæus!*

What with the "Judaism" disclosure, the various and varied attacks upon English musicians, the innuendos both public and private against the English press, the grotesque attribution of a *Lohengrin* intrigue to the Philharmonic directors, and now this monetary indiscretion that trickled into *Punch*—one cannot help but feel that Wagner's kindly phrase of 1877, "Der war mit mir in der Wüste" ("This man was with me in the wilderness") should receive a truer reading, "Had it not been for *Der*, there might have been no *Wüste*."

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* To shew the amount of credence to be lent this statement, it will be as well to give its rear-guard: "It was then that Wagner wrote to me: 'Try and negotiate for the sale of my opera "Tannhäuser" in London. If there be no possibility of concluding a bargain, and gaining a tangible remuneration for me, arrange that some firm shall take it so as to secure the English copyright.' I went off at once to my friend Frederick Beale, the head of the house Cramer, Beale & Co., now Cramer & Co. Though Frederick Beale was an enthusiast in art, with a sense beyond that of the ordinary speculator in other men's talent, yet 'he could not see his way to publishing "Tannhäuser."' I knew Beale would have done much for me, our relations being of so intimate a character, but the times 'were out of joint,' his geniality had just then led him to accept much that proved a financial loss to the firm [a certain trio?], and so the work which, as time now shows, would have produced a future [? fortune], was rejected, yes, rejected, though on behalf of Wagner I offered it *for nothing*. It is the old, old story," etc. (*As* 149-50). —Unfortunately it *is* the old, old story; for, on the one hand, *no* letter was written by Wagner to Praeger before Jan. '55 (see cap. II.), and on the other, P.'s German edition so far forgets verisimilitude as to make this apocryphal fragment from 1847 'tutoyer' him! It is a typical Praegerian compound, as: 1°, Wagner really writes to P. about *French* copyright in 1857; 2°, Beale published the overture to *Rienzi* somewhere in the later 'forties, but the letter to Liszt which alludes to that fact (Dec. 5, 49) disastrously prefaces it with "As yet I do not know a single soul in London."

V.

IN THE LION'S DEN.

Scoring Walküre ; *Klindworth plays and arranges it ;* Rheingold *score returned at last, transferred to K. ;* Walküre *suspended.—Third Philharmonic concert ; "kid-glove" fable. The Idealistin. "Veil of Maya."—Fourth concert ; Wagner, indignant, almost departs ; canards old and new thereon. A review of "two songs." Sympathy from Weimar.—Fifth concert :* Tannhäuser *overture ; all the critics come croppers.*

> *I shall see the wild beasts frequently, and march home at last with a few pence saved. What would one more ?*
> (To Otto, April '55).

About ten days ere leaving Zurich, Wagner had written Liszt : "The score of the first act of Walküre will soon be ready. It is an extraordinarily beautiful act ; I've never yet done anything to touch it." There will always be clowns to exclaim, What conceit !—but the composer has provided us an apt analogy ; some four years hence he writes Mathilde Wesendonck : "A terrible tale, child ; the master has made something good once again ! I have just been playing through the first half of my act [*Tristan* iii], and had to tell myself what dear God once told himself, when he found that All was good ! I have no one by to praise me, any more than dear God had then—about 6000 years back—and so, among other things, I told myself : Richard, you're a d—l of a fellow !" And why should the creator not take a proper pride in his creation ? If he did not, in both of Wagner's cases, we should think but poorly of his judgment ; then why should he conceal it from a bosom-friend ? *

* Two months after Wagner's confession to him, Liszt becomes the recipient of a still stronger avowal from Berlioz concerning his own *Te Deum*, performed that day at S. Eustache in Paris (April 30, '55) : "Oui, le Requiem a un frère, un frère qui est venu au monde avec des dents, comme Richard trois (moins la bosse) ; et je te réponds qu'il a mordu au cœur le public aujourd'hui. . . .

Exactly when the actual scoring of *Die Walküre* was started, no one knows; certainly not earlier than the very end of 1854, as the musical *draft* of the third act was not completed till Dec. 27, and this is the last of Wagner's works in which he leaves minute elaboration of the separate acts until after conclusion of the whole 'composition-draft.' Hoping to stick to this work without stop, probably he gave revision of his *Faust* the pas (see cap. I.); Jan. 21, 55, he writes Fischer, "I'm hard at work, already instrumenting Walküre," but his letter to Liszt of a couple of days previously, announcing completion of the *Faust* overture, is the first we had heard of *this* scoring: "I shall take my work to London with me, and hope to finish the instrumentation of the Walküre there." Vain hope!

Upon arrival in London there cannot have been much of the first act left to finish, since it was not ere the middle of March that he could resume it—20th, to Otto, "I have only been able to make a poor beginning as yet, the interruption was too violent; at the first my composition had become a perfect stranger to me"—yet the act is finished **April** 3, and he writes Liszt next day: "Let me complete my *Nibelungen!* my only desire. If my noble contemporaries cannot do that, Devil take them with all their fame and honours!—London has thrown me terribly behind with my work; only yesterday did I get through the instrumentation of the first act of Walküre. Everything weighs like lead on my body and mind; already I see I shall have to renounce my chief wish for this year—to be able to begin my 'young Siegfried' on the Seelisberg directly after my return; I shall hardly get beyond the second act of the Walküre here. In the way I've developed, I need a very soothing entourage, to feel cheered up for work: this constant having to pull myself together and stand on my guard yields me pride and disdain, but no craving for expansion, production." And to Otto, Apr. 5: "It goes slowly with my work; I have forgotten my composition almost entirely, and often had to ponder long, how I intended this or that; here I have totally lost the inner memory of it. The day before yesterday I got through the first act at last, with much labour, and am already contenting myself with the hope at

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Quel malheur que je sois l'auteur de tout cela! Je ferais un article curieux. Nous allons voir ce que vont *chanter* les confrères. Cette fois il ne s'agit pas de *piccoli paesi*, c'est une scène de l'Apocalypse."

least of finishing the second act as well here; I must save the third for Seelisberg, where I consequently shall be prevented from beginning my 'young Siegfried'—lucky for me, if I rediscover the drift of my work there and pluck up heart again for Siegfried.—Believe me, I *oughtn't* to have come to London; but that's the result 'quand on n'a pas l'esprit de son âge,' * as you have given me to understand.—Tut! it will all turn out well, and if I bring 1000 fr. with me, the episode has its reward. How many a poor wretch brings himself to the scaffold for much less!" (Had he been invited to an execution at Newgate as a 'third-rate entertainment'?)

A couple of days' holiday after the scoring of *Die Walküre* act i may well be granted, and at "8.30 in the evening" of April 5, again, writes Wagner to Liszt: "Klindworth has just been playing me your big sonata!—We passed the day alone together; he dined at my rooms, and after dinner had to play. Dearest Franz, this very moment you were with me—the sonata is beautiful beyond expression, grand, winning, deep and noble—lofty as yourself. It stirred the very marrow of me, and all the London misère was forgotten at a stroke. . . . Klindworth set me in amazement by his playing; it was meet that none lesser than he should adventure to play me your work for the first time. He is worthy of you, for sure, quite sure." For something like this had he been longing, to help attune him to creative work once more; "Niggard that you are"—he wrote Liszt three weeks earlier—"when *am* I to make acquaintance with your Faust-symphony [etc.]? Can't you believe I am pining for cordials, amid the hideous triviality that surrounds me every day?" But Klindworth did more than play Liszt to him; let him tell his own tale:—

"It was my frequent privilege to fetch him for a walk, then stop and dine with him, and after dinner I would have to play. Thus I once had the delight of introducing him to Liszt's sonata, and witnessing the deep impression it made upon him. Occupied as ever, at that time Wagner was instrumenting the 2nd act of Walküre; I begged leave to take the work's beginning home with me. Next day I played him the introduction, which I had

* Voltaire, quoted by Schopenhauer in the *Parerga*: "Qui n'a pas l'esprit de son âge, de son âge a tout le malheur."

arranged for the piano over-night; it pleased him so much, that he promptly let me take the whole [first] act with me. I set to as if possessed, and the transcription was soon done and put on paper—thus I became the first of his three 'Klavierauszügler': Bülow, Tausig and I. Wagner was delighted at hearing it played, and after his return to Zurich he sent me the score of Das Rheingold, to arrange that too." Klindworth must have had a peep at the *Rheingold* ere Wagner left London, though; for it was there its truant score returned to its author at last—a story we now must pick up at the point where we dropped it in chapter I.

Wagner had been parted from his only worked-out copy of *Das Rheingold* ever since its completion at the end of last September (iv, 390-2). Having lent it Liszt then "for a provisional month," he patiently reminds him mid-December '54: "If you have had enough of *Rheingold*, please send it to Chorus-master Fischer, Dresden; perhaps you would also ask him, from me, to hand it to the copyist, Wölfel, for completion of the transcript already begun" and interrupted solely for Liszt's pleasure. Liszt replies Jan. 1, 55, "I will send the score to Fischer a few days hence, according to your instructions"; and Wagner, who on the 19th ult. had told Fischer to expect it, enquires of him Jan. 21, "Has Liszt despatched the Rheingold? If so, let Wölfel write ahead, so that I may have my score again, if possible, before I start for London." Presumably Fischer answers that nothing has arrived yet, and Wagner may well have anxiously asked Liszt again (?—in a letter not preserved); for the latter half-apologises Feb. 16, "Hard as I find it to part with your Rheingold, I promise you I will send the score to Fischer in a few days' time. H[ans] can let me have the piano version later on." Another fortnight passes, and on his way through Paris (cf. cap. III.) Wagner writes to calm good Fischer's feelings: "You will see now, dear old fellow, that it is no question of my undervaluing your friendship; but Liszt alack, as I discover, has kept the score unconscionably long. Only the other day he wrote me he would send it off to you; let us hope that has been done by now, and I entreat you to acquaint me with its receipt at once, for I really am in great anxiety about this solitary example!!—To set my mind at rest as soon as possible, please also be so good as to hurry Wölfel on with his completion of the copy; as soon as that is ready, I will further beg of you to send

the copy to Berlin [for Hans to make the pfte version], but let me have the original score itself after feasting your eyes on my beautiful hand."

Now, perhaps, one can better sympathise with Wagner's plaint to Otto, "I have totally lost the inner memory of my composition." With a work of such gigantic compass as the *Ring*, it must have been maddening not to have the score of its first member by his side; and he would miss it even more as he approached the scoring of its second member's second act. It is proof of abnormal forbearance, to have let month after month pass without an explosion.

March 26 he writes Fischer again (letter 41), "Hasn't Liszt sent the 'Rheingold' yet? Do tell me, as I should so like to have the original score back soon, and that in London." About the selfsame day Liszt *had;* says his letter 181 (end of March '55), "I sent the score of Rheingold (beautifully bound) to W. Fischer at Dresden the day before yesterday"—half a year from its receipt at Weimar! No doubt it was mere negligence—much as with the *Holländer* confusion 1852-3 (vol. iv)—perhaps intensified by dilatoriness of the Weimar binder; yet the creator of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* would rather have had the loose sheets of his score at hand three months ago, than the superbest binding in the world. Even now he naturally has still to wait for it, but not a word of reproach does he utter to Liszt, whose letter 181 had blandly continued, "Has B[ülow] finished writing the pianoforte version? In that case I will ask him to let me have it later on—and at my next visit you shall sing and act the whole to me"—though he might have answered that question for himself, had he studied Hans' covering missive of last October, whence he must have derived the hint to get the MS. bound. Not a word of reproach is there in Wagner's answer, April 4: "B. had only just started on the 'Rheingold' when I took the partitur away from him, to send to you. As soon as the Dresden copy is finished, he shall receive that for preparation of the vocal score; thereafter, if it is any pleasure to you, you shall receive it yourself. Are we really to meet this year, then; perhaps on your return from Hungary? That *would* be something to look forward to! Perhaps by then I may also find my voice again, which has altogether left me since I have been here."

How urgently Wagner needed his score, is shewn by letter 42

to Fischer (early April), clearly in answer to an announcement of the precious object's safe advent in Dresden: "Do please have the completion of the copy of Rheingold seen to at once, so that I may regain possession of the original score at last. But Wölfel must work *fast*, for me to have my partitur at latest by the end of May. I'll write you what to do with the copy then"—from which it would appear that Klindworth is already thought of as a possible arranger, i.e. had voluntarily started on *Die Walküre*. Then May 10 to Fischer (dateless no. 40, misarranged): "As regards the Rheingold partitur, I beg you to send it to my address here at once, with the copy—as far as Wölfel has got with that. I need it too pressingly, to be able to wait any longer; I must have the duplicate finished at Zurich, where I have found a good copyist now." Finally letter 43 (circa first week in June): "Hearty thanks for despatch of my score . . . The copy is so beautifully done that I should like Wölfel to complete it after all, and consequently shall send the score back to you from Zurich. I had real need of it just now."

Having traced the history of this score so far, it will be as well to follow to its end. Aug. 17 writes Wagner to Fischer: "I want to have the interrupted copy of my Rheingold finished, and therefore send you the remainder [what had become of Liszt's binding?] —with the few prepared sheets—troubling you with a request to hand the thing to Wölfel as soon as possible. I have one remark to make, however: Liszt will be paying me a visit in October, and would like to play the score through with me then; so Wölfel must have finished by the end of September, for me to have my score back by the beginning of October; otherwise I should have to interrupt him again!"—Liszt still remains the first consideration. Apparently early September (no. 46 to F.): "I suppose I shall have to be patient with Wölfel; it really is a ticklish job. I do hope he'll have finished in course of November, tho'—say, by the middle; that would be in the nick of time" for Liszt's projected visit. At last, and seemingly at the appointed time (undated letter 47): "Many thanks for the copy; it has turned out remarkably well. Please tell Wölfel so,"—not one of his faithful subsidiaries does he ever fail to praise. Meanwhile von Bülow has become too heaped with professional drudgery at Berlin, to be asked to undertake this heavy task into the bargain; so the duplicate of the *Rheingold* score is sent ere

long to Klindworth, and at the beginning of April '56 Wagner is "expecting it back from London, together with Klindworth's transcription," the pfte vocal score so familiar to all readers of these pages and first published in 1861 (Schott).

In the uncongenial atmosphere of London the scoring of *Die Walküre* makes little progress, notwithstanding that it occupied the forefront of its author's cares during the greater part of his sojourn and he originally had hoped to end it here. "One inconsistency draws after it another"—had he written Liszt immediately after the first Philharmonic, apropos of his Berlin capitulation—"I can only repress my loathing by becoming still more disdainful and viewing even Tannhäuser and Lohengrin as altogether done with, no longer works of mine, whilst guarding my *new creations* all the holier for myself and my true friends alone. It really is my only solace, that what I now am fashioning shall either *never* enter life, or only in altogether fitting circumstances. So I shall henceforth focus all my strength on that, all my pride—all my *renunciation.* Should I die without having presented these works, I bequeath them to you;* and should you die without having been able to present them worthily, then—you must *burn* them: your *hand on that!*"—reminding us of his earlier wish regarding *Siegfried's Tod* (iii, 227). After that we had the toilsome completion of act i the 3rd of April, and Klindworth's starting work on it; as to which Wagner writes Liszt six weeks later, "Klindworth has made the Klavierauszug [pfte, alias 'vocal' score] of the first act of 'Walküre,' and plays it famously. Unfortunately I've entirely lost my voice here and can sing no more to speak of; so I fear I shall be of no particular use with it to you either."

Between the beginning and end of April he has only been able to finish the first and second scenes of act ii, for he tells Mathilde Wesendonck Apr. 30: "Fricka has just gone off, and Wodan must now give vent to his terrible woe.—Beyond this second act I shall in no case get here; I can work but very slowly, and every day brings some fresh upset to contend with.—My London

* By another strange coincidence, Berlioz sends Liszt his *Mémoires* less than two months hence, with the following message: "Si je mourais avant d'avoir reçu de toi mon manuscrit, je te prie de le garder et d'en arranger une publication *fidèle*. . . . Pardon de te parler sur ce ton testamentaire; mais, comme disent les bonnes femmes, cela ne fait pas mourir."

experiences are determining me to withdraw from public music-making altogether for some years to come; this concert-conducting must have an end . . . I now need total inner equilibrium, to complete my big work." About the same date August Roeckel is told pretty nearly the same (letter VI.): "I'm continually put out, here, and my work goes but slowly forward. . . . In the summer I return to my dear Switzerland, which I think of never leaving more. Retirement, natural scenery and—work: that's the only element of life for me now, and I will not let myself be torn from it again." So "put out" by his environment is he, that he has "fears of Wodan's great scene with Brünnhilde, and even got the length, in London, of wanting to cut it adrift. To settle the point, I took up the draft once more and sang the whole scene to myself with due expression; when I luckily found that my *spleen* was unwarranted and it was engrossing even as sheer music," as he writes Liszt next October (cf iv, 400-1). The dun absence of colour in the first half of this scene—so dramatic in its contrast with the rest of the work, however disappointing to our musical anticipations—shall we attribute it to the dank mists from the Regent's Canal and St John's burial-ground? Most certainly it stands aloof from everything else its composer has written: to produce this grisly effect of blank helplessness on the part of his god, was it imperative that that god's creator should be shackled to his "London misère"? In the keener air of Zurich, or upon the Seelisberg, I fancy the instrumenting of the first half of act ii might possibly have turned out richer, if less appropriately.

Beyond that long soliloquy of Wotan's, the scoring of which commenced in May, we have no further indication; quite probably its author never struggled past it till he left our grip. May 16 he writes Liszt: "It was a positive crime to accept this London invitation, which in the happiest event could but have led me far from my true road. . . . I can scarcely express the purgatory I'm passing through; all zest for work is dwindling more and more away, here. I had intended to finish the score of my 'Walküre' in the four London months: already that's out of the question; I shall not get through even the second act, so hideously dementalising is the pressure of this wicked situation on me. I wanted to commence my young Siegfried at Seelisberg, on the Lake of Lucerne, in July: already I think of

postponing that commencement to next spring.—This disrelish for work is the worst of it; it is as if eternal Night were drawing in upon me. What purpose is left me in this world, if I cannot work?" Similarly to Otto on the 22nd (his birthday, too): "Money-earning is not my business in this world, but creating; and to enable me to do *that* undisturbed, the world would really have to care. Yet the world, you know, cannot be forced, but does no else than it has mind to,—pretty much as I myself should like to do. . . . At anyrate this last experience will teach me to expose myself to no internal discord of the kind again, but keep entirely outside this humdrum musicking, to reserve my powers for my creations. The stay here has been very detrimental to my work, and thrown me quite a whole year back; for I now feel so fatigued in mind that I shall content myself for the rest of this year with bringing off the 'Walküre,' and must save 'young Siegfried' for next. That resignation is the only thing at all to ease me."

And so it continues throughout his residence among us. June 7, to Liszt: "It is very natural that you and I should find pleasure in naught save creation, nay, can make life bearable no other way. Only while creating, are we really our own true selves; all other of life's functions have no sense for us, at bottom are only concessions to the commonness of every-day existence, in which we never feel at home. All that *I*, at least, still wish for in this world, is a good frame of mind for work; and how hard it comes to me, to hold to that against the impact of vulgarity." He had fled from Zurich for his *inner* peace, poor man, and the outer disturbance of London proved still worse for him. So Fischer hears a week thereafter (June 15), "I have my last concert on the 25th and shall leave on the 26th, in my tranquil retirement to pick up at last my terribly broken-off works." Finally July 5, back at Zurich itself: "I felt better as soon as my foot touched the continent; the air here suits me, and I hope to be soon at my work again, which I entirely gave up in London in the end. You will find little of the *Walküre* quite finished" (to L.). About half an act, presumably; whereas the whole might have been finished and fair-copied quite a month before, had he remained at home. *He* could not serve two masters, and having cast in his lot with ourselves for a season, it would have been far better if the aforesaid mental "resignation"

had been his London motto from the first. By determining to make his personal way here, to find the hidden key to our hearts —which really were not half so black as his denationalised compatriots told him—he might have returned to Zurich with his energies renewed by friendly contact, instead of sapped by cold resistance and "frequent nervous headaches" (to Otto, May 22).

How the time slipped outwardly by from the beginning of April to the third concert, even Praeger does not try to tell us (he occupies it with a homily on stage-animals), though it seems probable that Edward Roeckel's visit was paid him in the Easter holidays (see p. 302).* Easter falling that year on the 8th of April, the usual fortnight's interval between two Philharmonic concerts had necessarily been extended to three weeks; we will bridge it as best we can by Wagner's own account of his position. Early in April he writes old Fischer: "I am holding out like a passover lamb, but it's not my business, and I hope it will be my very last visit to London. I have nothing to seek here, and the Jews may conduct their silly concerts for them too. As for that, a deal of noise is made about and round me." To Liszt he is more circumstantial (Apr. 4): "My situation here is a complete anomaly; I find myself in an utterly foreign element and a thoroughly false position. If I conduct symphonies now and then at Zurich, it is for pastime and the sake of a few friends; but to try and make a calling of it, to the extent of submitting to be judged accordingly as artist by a totally unsympathetic press and public, is a huge absurdity. I heartily repent of being here, and think of never returning in all my life. Pecuniary profit isn't to be thought of, and even if they were to offer me a bigger honorarium for next year, I expect I should have to decline it, my loss of temper is too great. It isn't my business—and at my age, with my present shaky health, if I cannot bide entirely by *my own affair*, I'd rather not bide at all, for my life is hard enough without. Thoroughly fine performances, the only thing to compensate me for it all, are beyond my power to bring about; there are too few rehearsals for that here, and everything

* Says Wagner's dateless letter vi to August R.: "I see a good deal of Praeger, that amiable noodle (*guten närrischen Menschen*). Eduard also was lately there on a visit; tomorrow I mean to go and idle a few days with him at Bath"—a journey that never came off.

is run too much on business lines. Notwithstanding that the pieces from Lohengrin met with approval, I regret having given them, for my humiliation at having nothing but such samples to offer of this work, and permitting my whole essence to be judged therefrom, is far too great. Moreover, the thought of taking a step of any kind to win over this blackguard crew of journalists, revolts me like poison. So they go on reviling at the top of their bent, and it only surprises me that the audience has not actually allowed itself, so far, to be misled.—In brief, I am quite out of place in this booth, and should be, even if I pleased people."

Liszt's answer comes a little late to calm him—a month after date: "Tiresome as it is, one must do one's best to put up with the inevitable, unalterable—to accommodate oneself thereto would be mendacity.—The English edition of Philistinism is not a whit more agreeable than the German, and the gulf between the public and ourselves yawns just as widely everywhere." Let us hope some soothing, cheering message came from Zurich in the interval; for the third concert awaits us, Apr. 16:—

Part I.

Sinfonia in A, No. 2	Mendelssohn.
Aria, "Va s'bramando" (Faust), Mr Weiss .	Spohr.
Concerto, Pianoforte, in B flat, op. 19, Mr Lindsay Sloper	Beethoven.
Aria, "Bald schlägt die Abscheidsstunde," Madame Rudersdorff	Mozart.
Overture, "Euryanthe"	Weber.

Part II.

Sinfonia in C minor, No. 5	Beethoven.
Recit. "Im Wechsel immer da" } "Faust," Aria, "Ja, ich fühl'es" } Mme Rudersdorff	Spohr.
Overture, "Les deux Journées" . . .	Cherubini.

Hogarth, mostly first in the field, is as friendly as before in his *Daily News* report, Apr. 17:—

Mendelssohn's "Italian Symphony," the finest of his orchestral works, was played with an effect not surpassed on any former occasion. The times of the different movements were taken as we have been accustomed to hear them, excepting the "Saltarello" at the end, which was quicker; yet, in the rapid, impetuous whirl of the

Neapolitan dance, the utmost distinctness was preserved. In Beethoven's great symphony in C minor, Herr Wagner produced some unusual effects, by retardations and accelerations of the time, which appeared to us to be exceedingly beautiful, and quite legitimate. The final movement, the triumphal march, was taken very quick, with immense energy. Throughout the whole symphony its lofty character was nobly sustained, and we never were more strongly impressed with its grandeur and power. Beethoven's pianoforte concerto . . is one of the composer's early works, and has been very seldom performed in this country. Considering its exceeding beauty, the neglect it has met with is unaccountable . . [on Sloper and the other artists] . . Taken as a whole, this was a concert of the highest order, both in regard to selection and performance.

No token, in the above, of friction between Wagner and the directors, or of the latter's alleged plot to get rid of him.—The *Illustrated* of the 21st has a very brief notice, the arrival of the Emperor and Empress of the French, on the 16th, filling all editors' thoughts and probably accounting for the *Times'* complete silence on this concert also.* Of the two neutrals, the *Sunday Times* alone reports it; so here is what H. Smart says on the 22nd :—

Both the symphonies—and marvellous specimens they are of their composers' genius—went exceedingly well, always allowing somewhat for the still imperfect understanding subsisting between Herr Wagner and the orchestra he conducts. There was nothing very out-of-the-way or unexpected about the reading of Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony, as it is called; it was directed, during the first movements at least, much in the usual manner, and very finely performed. The last movement, the Saltarello, however, was taken at a prodigious pace, yet not too fast, since it was within the verge of clear execution by the band, and that would almost seem to be the only limit to its effective speed. This extraordinary work gains in estimation with every fresh hearing, and is surely working its way to an honoured place among the very first things of its class. It is curious enough to compare its cool reception, as we remember it, at

* Not only I myself, but also a friend to whom I am gratefully indebted for about half of these journal-notices, have searched every edition of the *Times* for the whole month of April 1855, yet can find no notice of the third, any more than of the second Philharmonic concert. Certainly *As* says, "Wagner was taunted in the 'Times' with 'a coarse and rigorously frigid performance'" of the Italian Symphony, but is obviously quoting from Davison's *M. Wd* critique (*vid. inf.*), whilst those who still look to P. for accuracy on any point must surely be past praying for.

its first Philharmonic performance, with the enthusiasm and delight it now everywhere kindles [*mutatis mutandis*, apply that to *Loh.* and *Tannh.*]. The conductor was much more excursive in his dealings with the C minor symphony of Beethoven. There were many strange points, many changes and breaks in the time, and some vagueness of effect in consequence. Yet some of the novelties were well conceived, and, especially, the time and spirit assigned to the final *allegro* produced one of the finest performances of that movement we remember.

The effect on the listener, of the orchestral performances thus far in the present Philharmonic season, is of a very mixed description. Much of the savage military ferocity acquired during the last few years has been tamed down, and a degree of suavity and sentiment imparted even to the tone of the band [*note this*] that is vastly grateful; while, on the other hand, one listens always with a certain amount of misgiving lest, in the wilfulness [?] of the conductor's impulses, something untoward should happen. Some similar feeling seems to possess the orchestra. They are manifestly not yet familiar with Herr Wagner, and appear always uneasy, not so much with what he may be about on the instant, as with the apprehension of some unrehearsed fancy he may chance to entertain. All this may wear off, and as we have before said, the sooner the better. Certainly no two conductors can be more opposite in all respects than Mr Costa and Herr Wagner. One is a stern matter-of-fact drill-master; the other is a poet and an enthusiast. Mr Costa has done his utmost to vulgarise the Philharmonic band, by his unvarying inculcation of a hard, coarse and angular style; while Herr Wagner is at present creating some little bewilderment by his endeavours to efface the deeply-cut outline of his predecessor, and impart some of the less earthy suggestions of his more romantic temperament. If compelled to choose between them, we infinitely prefer the latter, yet a medium would be better than either. The performance of some grim mechanic, who hammers out a Beethoven sonata on the piano, regardless of everything save notes, is unqualifiedly odious; yet when we hear the too-sentimental languors of a young lady, who sighs and dreams all music into fragments [what about that Saltarello?], we give her credit for the vitality of her emotions, yet wish them somewhat more under judicious restraint [Winds up with the artists].

Save that he does not make sufficient allowance for the impossibility of regenerating a decadent band at one breath, Smart's attitude is fair enough, to the present; whilst his impartial testimony to the "very fine performance" of the Italian Symphony should silence every innuendo that Wagner treated the music of Mendelssohn shabbily.—The Implacable has little

to say on this concert, but says it tartly, in the *Athenæum* of Apr. 21:—

The music was badly conducted: a more loose and careless performance of Mendelssohn's Symphony in A we do not remember, nor ruder and slacker accompaniments to the *solo* and to the vocal music. In the overture to 'Euryanthe,' and Beethoven's well-known C minor Symphony, indifference was exchanged for exaggeration; but the orchestra was, as before, loose in execution and coarse in expression. The attendance was thin; and now that the [? un-] discriminating cordiality with which the English welcome all strangers, as strangers, has subsided, we cannot see how Herr Wagner will sustain himself in London as head of an orchestra—since, though his plan of conducting elect music by heart is calculated to impress and startle the innocent the average concert-goer would prefer to this wonder a good execution of all the pieces chosen, without obvious contempt for certain portions, balanced by vehemence and affectation in others.

As for Davison, he is rather more savage this time than of wont; but how had he filled the void in the *Musical World* since his report on the second concert? April 7 he had merely reprinted "Two Opinions" on Wagner, confronting that of the *Spectator* with that of the *Athenæum* (both given above, cap. IV.). Apr. 14, speaking of Opera in general, he indulged in a playful slap: "The *libretti* of the present day are all good [!]—too good. Verdi and Halévy choose good books no less than Auber and Meyerbeer . . . Herr Richard Wagner will have his own 'books,' no others; not even Professor Praeger's—of Hamm. We must look about us, or we may 'drift,' without knowing it, into the 'music of the future,' as the ministers into the war" (N.B. After P.'s proclamation *urbi et orbi* of "our mutual friendship" in the *M. Wd* of the 24th ult., its editor's perpetual coupling of his name with Wagner's need not surprise). In the same issue a brief announcement heads the leaders: "In anticipation of a series of papers upon Herr Richard Wagner, his system and his music, which are now in preparation, we have thought it fair to give our readers some notion of his poetical *drama*. The commencement of a literal translation of the book of *Lohengrin* will be seen on another page." The said translation, continued through four numbers concluding May 5, is by no means so grotesque as might be feared; in fact it is sometimes quite good, though marred by a sprinkling of baldnesses such as the following: "*Friedrich.* My Lord, the vain maiden who, full of pride,

rejected my hand, is a visionary. I, therefore, accuse her of a secret love. She, no doubt, thought that, when she had got rid of her brother, she would have a right," etc.—Some ten weeks previously Liszt had written Wagner, "I shall shortly send you your three opera-poems translated into English, MS. You may find a use for them in London"; to which Wagner had jocularly replied, "I'm highly delighted with the idea of that translation; I mean to learn English at last by its aid. Am I to have it before leaving Zurich?" It is impossible to discover who Liszt's English expert was—perhaps Princess Marie's governess—but it is doubtful if Wagner would have found the Weimar product smarten up his "English" appreciably more than this harmless attempt in the *M. World*, from which I will only further pluck two jewels in the issue of Apr. 21: "*Loh.* Now be thanked my beloved swan! retire up the broad stream again. . . . *King etc.* I feel my heart melt within me when I look on that most comely man." The poem had simply been hastily turned into prose by a writer without enthusiasm or inspiration (Bridgeman?).

In the same issue we have Davison's criticism of the Philharmonic concert of Apr. 16, and we must have it whole:—

The third concert, on Monday evening, was but indifferently attended. The new conductor has evidently failed to excite public curiosity. The war of nations, however, is a more engrossing topic than the war of systems; and, until Sebastopol be taken, the question of Richard Wagner *versus* Music is likely to remain in abeyance. Thirty guineas [£25] a concert is, we must admit, a large sum for a *chef-d'orchestre* out of Zurich; but that is a matter which the reigning directors of the Philharmonic Society may possibly be called upon to explain, at some future congress of as many among the forty members as care a straw for its welfare. At the present juncture it is doubtful even whether a fifty-guinea time-stick would be able to rouse the apathetic, or swell the subscription list. [*Programme.*]

A contemporary (*The Daily News*) declares that he never heard the "Italian" symphony go so well. We regret to be at issue with him, but are forced to record that we never heard it go worse anywhere. A more coarse, monotonous, uniformly loud, and at the same time rigorously frigid performance, never left an audience unmoved and apathetic in a concert-room. It was deplorable to witness the contemptuous unconcern with which the whole of this admirable work of genius was regarded by the representative of the "future art-drama." The same thing was remarked at rehearsal. The band was never once arrested, nor did the conductor proffer a single observation.

Herr Wagner's "reading" of the music of Mendelssohn may be signalised in a sentence:—*Get to the end of it as quick as possible.** It is not, however, for Dr Liszt and the petty tribunals of Weimar and Leipsic to decide which is the greater man—the author of *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*, or the author of *St. Paul* and *Elijah*. No, indeed! *Dieu merci!* The symphony went off without any demonstrations of satisfaction; and that most heavenly of slow movements, which never before failed to create enthusiasm, scarcely obtained a hand of applause. It was barbarous!

In Weber's overture to *Euryanthe* the new conductor resumed his vivacity, his gesticulations, his "ups and downs," and his forced readings. This "went off" like a shell at Sebastopol—"fizzing" and screaming for dear life. It was *not* encored, however. The effect produced was what might be imagined after the unanticipated shock of an earthquake. The audience looked at each other, aghast. Some said "Wonderful!"—others said nothing; and these last were the wisest. Herr Wagner is as warm to his countryman, Weber, as he is cold to his countryman, Mendelssohn. But Mendelssohn was of *Jewish* extract; and the "shawms" of the Hebrews, we presume, are not to make part of the orchestra "of the Future," however the Present may hold Mendelssohn's "shawm" to have a sweeter tone than Herr Wagner's trumpet, which is chiefly occupied in blowing flourishes for his own glorification. Nevertheless, with all his preference, in the "book" of *Oper und Drame* Herr Wagner calls Weber "the unhappy." He (Weber), it appears, plucks national tunes (wild flowers) from the fields, puts them in drawing-room vases, and is surprised that they die in spite of his watering-pot. His (Weber's)

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* Singularly enough, that is the pith of the remarks Wagner himself puts in Mendelssohn's mouth: "He personally informed me more than once that a slow tempo was the worst of all in conducting, and he would far rather have things taken too fast; a really good rendering was a rarity at any time, but one might gloss things over; and that could best be done by never dawdling, but pushing straight ahead. . . . Of this I had aural experience with the orchestra of the Philharmonic Society in London. Mendelssohn had conducted that band for a longish spell [parts of four different seasons] and the Mendelssohn style of conducting had avowedly become a fixed tradition here. . . . As a vast amount of instrumental music was consumed at these concerts, but only one rehearsal allowed for each performance, I was frequently obliged to leave the band to follow its tradition, and thereby made acquaintance with a mode of rendering which forcibly reminded me, at any rate, of Mendelssohn's expressions to myself" (*Conducting—P.* IV. 306).—It should also be remembered that Wagner had never conducted this symphony before, probably never even heard it; if he chose to take a lesson this time from his band, it was the most prudent course he could possibly follow in a hot-bed of Mendelssohn-worship.

"*stammering*" is an honest confession of the incapacity of music to exist alone—and, as a natural consequence, of the superiority of Herr Wagner and his system of "real drama." Good. It is as well to learn something of *das Wesen der Musik (!)*.

The execution of Beethoven's Symphony in C minor was chiefly remarkable for a variety of hitherto unknown effects, pauses long (too long) drawn out, etc., and a quicker *tempo* for the last movement, to which, though unaccustomed, we have no objection, and which, indeed, we rather like than otherwise. Cherubini's fine overture offered little for comment.

Mr Lindsay Sloper's performance of the early and very interesting pianoforte concerto in B flat of Beethoven was in all respects masterly; style and execution were equally free from reproach. He must be thanked, moreover, for choosing this particular work, and thus affording a little repose to the three grand concertos so frequently brought forward by pianists. His success was as great and well deserved as at the recent concert of the New Philharmonic Society, when he played the concerto in D minor of Mendelssohn.—The vocal music was unexceptionable [etc., etc.]

The audience were cold to everything in the concert [singers and all, then?], which certainly did not elevate Herr Wagner as a conductor in the estimation of connoisseurs. Perhaps the overture to *Tannhäuser*, which is to be performed at the fourth concert, and was rehearsed on Saturday, will do something more to advance his claims as a composer. Dr Liszt, in a long and teratological essay, proclaims this overture one of the most prodigious inspirations of the musical art. *Nous verrons.**

There you have plain evidence of the effect of Dreisterner's reckless "Judaism" disclosure on an ardent Mendelssohnian; but please observe that not a word is said about a certain "kid-glove" myth too long accepted as reality. The late Dr Hueffer was the first, I believe, to give it modern currency, in that

* At foot of the page are two jottings: 1°, "WAGNER AND ROSSINI.—Professor Praeger, of Hamm, being asked to define the difference between the music of Wagner and the music of Rossini, replied:—'The music of Wagner will always be the Music of the Future; the music of Rossini always the Music of the Present'!"—not very brilliant, Mr Davison. 2°, "A PUNCH FOR WAGNER.—Our hook-nosed, short-legged, pot-paunched, facetious, and highly-respected, not to say much-feared contemporary, *Punch*, defines the 'Music of the Future' thus briefly:—'*Promissory Notes*'"—which is much less offensive than *Punch's* own version, already recorded.—Turning over the page, one finds among Foreign items, that Tichatschek appeared at the Dantzig theatre in *Tannhäuser* at Eastertide—no comment.

Quarterly of 1888: "We have been informed on the best authority that Wagner, when he had to conduct a work by Mendelssohn, deliberately and slowly put on a pair of white kid gloves, to indicate the formal, or one may say fashionable, character of the music,* and this piece of bad taste naturally roused the ire of Mendelssohn's admirers, in the Press and elsewhere. As is usual, in such cases, both sides were to blame. But at the same time it remains a matter for regret that the influence which a man of Wagner's genius and high artistic aims might have had on English music, was thus almost literally 'snuffed out by an article.'"—Now, is it conceivable that Davison, with his relish for personal digs, should have missed such a capital opening? But Hueffer has forgotten one important requisite, the *name* of his authority for "this piece of bad taste," or failing that, a definite reference to the "article" said to have "almost literally snuffed out" Wagner's influence in England. I will endeavour to make good that omission.

"White kid gloves on the hands of a conductor"—quoth *As I*—"he scoffed at. 'Who can do anything fettered with these things?' he pettishly insisted; and it was only after considerable pressure, and pointing out the aristocratic antecedents of the Philharmonic and the class of its supporters, that he had consented to wear a pair just to walk up the steps of the orchestra on first appearing, to be taken off immediately he got to his desk." That is tied to the tail of P.'s account of the alleged supper-party after the first concert, and since the subject is not mentioned again, it must be taken as applying either *to no* following one, or to them all. Now turn to "Dreisterner," as reproduced in the *M. World* of June 9, 55, immediately after the bit on the Smarts (see cap. IV.), and prefaced by Davison thus: "But now for the Wagner part of the letter, which, as usual, is an unblushing mixture of effrontery, bad English, worse criticism, and contempt of truth:—

"The third concert of the Old Philharmonic has been given; and began with Mendelssohn's so-called Italian Symphony (written for the

* Mr Finck quotes it thus far, from its reprint in Hueffer's *Half a Century*, adding a comment of his own: "This amusing and harmless bit of irony, on the part of the Mendelssohn-tormented genius, of course aroused the ire of the press anew." Sorry as I am to damp the mirth of our American cousins, I am compelled to remind them that the story was *first* printed by themselves, and half a century ago.

Society). It is not his best work, and the first movement and scherzo are as void of heartfelt music as some of his *Lieder ohne Worte;* it is 'made' music—aye, ready-made, and he might have gone on a great while longer in the same strain, without getting excited ; but here it is sacrilege to meddle with Mendelssohn. Wagner conducted the symphony in white kid gloves, and took them off immediately after, as he never wears them, although it is almost a law here for the conductor. Notwithstanding *that*, the symphony went better than we have yet heard it, although Wagner would have preferred the so-called Scotch symphony, which is an infinitely superior work. The overtures to *Euryanthe* and *Deux Journées*, as well as the C minor (Beethoven's) symphony, came out with indescribable newness and effect, making, so to speak, the music *al fresco* [what *does* he mean?—W.A.E.] It is not enthusiasm which leads us to qualify him as founder of a new era in conducting music; we have heard all that could be heard within the last twenty-five years, and have yearned for and dreamed of a nobler state of things than a living metronome at the head of an orchestra, but did not believe it practicable to make it such a tool to the individual will as Wagner does; and it requires *such* a master-mind, *such* a brain, firm will, and enthusiasm to carry the principle out. The singing was very indifferent, and Beethoven's pianoforte concerto in B flat, although performed with much purity and correctness by Lindsay Sloper, was again a proof that here the *name* is the *thing*—the composition being quite unworthy of Beethoven's name, and was a child's work even when written: as the piano, as an instrument, is miserably treated *à la rococo*, and the concerto altogether deserves to sleep on the Philharmonic shelves. Beethoven would disown it as he did works of much more sterling worth; as for example, his Septet, which he called 'Eine verfluchte Composition, gut in's Feuer zu werfen,' (a —— composition, only good to be thrown into the fire.) For the fourth concert Mozart's symphony in E flat was fixed on, and Wagner's *Tannhäuser* overture, but since then the directors altered it to a symphony, by Mr Lucas (one of the directors), and Weber's *Ruler of Spirits*, a youthful and weak attempt. Fortunately, Mr Lucas will conduct the child of his own fancy, and Beethoven's A major symphony will be brought up in the rear by Richard Wagner. Credat Judæus."

Naturally that goaded Davison into a fury, and it is obvious that the head and tail of it were written for no other purpose. This is how he takes up the challenge, hurled across Wagner's unoffending body: "*Credat Judæus!*—The 'first movement and *scherzo* of the A major symphony' are 'as void of heartfelt music as some of the *Lieder ohne Worte!*'—we believe it, but *no more.* 'The symphony went better than he (***) ever heard it'!—with

what peculiar ears he must be endowed. Midas himself was a judge to him; and, by the way, in giving the palm to Pan instead of to Apollo, Midas not more richly merited his ears than Professor Drei-Sterner Plauderein Praeger of Hamm, *his* ears, for preferring Herr Wagner to Mendelssohn. Weber's overture to the *Ruler of the Spirits*, too, is 'a youthful and weak attempt.' O Gemini!"—That is the whole of Davison's comment, and it will be seen that he was too enraged to stoop to notice those "kid gloves" in detail—unless we are to take the italicised *that*, with some of the other italics in Dreisterner's effusion, as underlinings by the *M. Wd* editor, whose general opinion of this imbecility is expressed with quite sufficient force in his preamble.

As to ***'s judgment in launching such a story, whether true or not, there cannot be two opinions; for there still remained two concerts for Wagner to appear at, even after that challenge to the Mendelssohnians at length returned to England. As to its truth, on the other hand, could anything go more dead against that, than the fact that this its reproduction is the absolutely *only* mention of the problematic incident in any English journal of the period? No one but Dreisterner knew anything about it—most certainly not Wagner. Let us hope we shall hear no more of childish stories spread abroad on *such* authority.

It must have been this third concert (see 250*n*) that numbered among its audience a very different type of advocate, also personally unknown to Wagner before his London stay—Malwida von Meysenbug, one of the earliest champions of the higher responsibilities of Woman, and famous hereafter through her *Memoirs of an Idealist.* Frln v. Meysenbug (she remained single, to her death in 1903) was not quite four years Wagner's junior; like him, she had been an ardent but principally passive adherent of the 'revolutionary' cause in 1848 and after. The family's means being considerably straitened by the death of her father (Dec. '47), formerly Court-marshal to the Elector of Hesse-Cassel, Malwida determined to strike her own path in the world, and attached herself in 1850 to a high-school for ladies at Hamburg. Lady-day '52, Wagner writes Uhlig: "I had a letter from Hamburg yesterday, from a lady of aristocratic birth who thanks me for my essays, saying they have been her salvation; she declares herself a thorough revolutionary.—Thus it is ever the women who have

their hearts in the right place so far as I'm concerned." No, reader, it was anything but a friendship hazardous to Minna's peace of mind, as you will learn in due course. The Idealist herself shall tell the tale of its commencement:—

"One after the other, I had read three newly-published books from one and the same pen, 'Art and the Revolution,' 'The Art-work of the Future,' and 'Opera and Drama.' The author, Richard Wagner, himself an exile residing in Switzerland since the Dresden revolt in the Spring of 49, was personally unknown to me; but I was so powerfully moved by the flood of ideas that streamed towards me from these books, and in which I recognised that gospel of the Future of Germany which I also dreamed of, that I wrote to him after reading 'Oper und Drama' [pubd end of 1851]; I also received a kind answer. Unfortunately, before my departure from Germany I had been unable to hear any of his musical works, which were just beginning to be given on German stages here and there; but Theodor [Althaus] and Anna had read the text of 'Tannhäuser' with me at Hamburg, and all three of us were enraptured by it, feeling that a new path had been opened for a truly redemptory art. That text was full of profound ethical import . . . and I longed to attend a performance enhanced by its expression in music. Leaving Germany, all hope of such a thing was cut from me. Neither did I seek to keep up correspondence with the gifted writer and poet-composer, because, entirely unknown to him, I did not want to be a nuisance; also since all those visions of the Future had been chased, it seemed to me, to dimmest distance, far beyond my reach" (*Memoiren &c.* II. 84-6—eighth ed. 1904).

Just two months after her letter to Wagner, the Idealist had been compelled to leave Germany under instant peril of arrest by the police of Berlin (whither she had removed in the brief interval), who already had seized her private papers. Fleeing to England, an exile now herself, she naturally took shelter with some of the countless host of foreign refugees who swarmed and schemed in London then; of all grades were they, from Kossuth and Mazzini down to the communist mechanic. Needless to run through the list of celebrities with whom this high-minded enthusiast was brought into more or less intimate intercourse during her ten-year stay here, and whose word-portraits she has so skilfully drawn. She supported herself for the most part by

means of private lessons in the German language, and in 1855 was acting as superior instructress to the children of Alexander Herzen, a noted Russian outlaw of great literary talent. Here again she shall take the word herself :—

"We were residing at Richmond then. I was greatly excited by the news that Richard Wagner had been called to London from Zurich, where he was living in exile, to conduct a season's concerts of the New [Old] Philharmonic Society. I have already mentioned that I had read his books in Germany . . . Later, I had also made acquaintance with the texts of Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, and the Ring des Nibelungen. How often in earliest youth had I pondered on the educational influence the Theatre must wield, if Art were elevated in it to a cult of the Ideal. . . . I firmly believed in Life's true perfecting by means of Art; but it seemed to me as if a long hard task, as it were the tilling of earth's stubborn rind, must still precede the blooming of that perfect flower. In Wagner's writings I had found the finished theory of what I felt and dreamt, myself, in misty outline. Thus seized and penetrated by a sense of the import of Musical Drama, I had derived from those marvellous texts a presentiment of the ennobling effect upon life, unequalled in its influence, which the highest tragic work of Art must have when transfigured by its musical setting. The wish to hear some of that music had grown to a burning desire in me, though there did not seem the faintest prospect of fulfilment. Judge, then, my agitation by the tidings that the author of those pregnant books, the creator of those texts steeped in poetry, was coming to London. I heard of his arrival through my former rooms-mate, a young German musician, and envied her her having met him several times at the house of friends of hers. It was not so easy for me to go up for even one of the concerts, as, with the Londoners' late hours, they lasted far into the night [11 p.m.?] and it would be impossible for me to return into the country afterwards. So I had to try and arrange to pass the night in town, and left no stone unturned until I compassed it.

"What I experienced at the concert I attended, was of such a nature that I could recall only one musical impression like it, namely that when I once heard Schröder-Devrient in my youth . . . I had the same revelation at that concert through an orchestral rendering which for the first time seemed to open up

to me the secrets of the world of tone, and set the long-familiar in so new a light that it appeared as if fresh-given. More especially was this the case with Weber's overture.* . . . The conductor's personality had as little part in this impression, as it had had when I read his books. I sat too far away to form a clear idea of that [her eyesight, too, was 'weak']; but I had the feeling as if a wave of harmony were visibly streaming from his baton over the whole orchestra and making the bandsmen play, as if unconsciously, in a higher mode than had ever been possible to them before. Amongst all I had heard till then in concert-teeming England, that concert stood alone" (*ibid.* 277-81).

The Idealist's impressions of that concert, however, are of secondary interest to her first meeting with its conductor face to face—the omitted date whereof might have helped to account for his mood. So we will beseech her to continue: "You may imagine the delight with which I accepted an invitation from Anna [Althaus] a little later, to spend an evening at their house in Wagner's company. The only impediment was the thought of severing myself for two days and a night again from my beloved charges; but I could not forgo the long-desired meeting. At the first instant I was somewhat taken aback by the chill reserve with

* Frln v. Meysenbug says "to Freischütz," and proceeds to describe its "woodland magic" etc.; but, loth as I am to contradict a lady, the rest of her account makes that impossible. In the first place, if Glasenapp is right in assuming her young friend's friends to be the Beneckes, there would not have been time for that young friend to have met Wagner "several times" at their house before the concert of March 26. In the second, one would have expected the Idealist to remember at least the encoring—not to mention the *Choral* symphony with Schiller's revolutionary verses. But the third point settles it: not only has she nothing to say here of the *Lohengrin* excerpts, which could not have failed to constitute her principal topic, but in her third volume, when dealing with Paris 1859-60, she tells us, "Until then I only knew a scrap or two of Wagner's music, played on the piano by a German musician of my acquaintance in England [Klindworth?], yet even that little had seized me with a sorcery as never had music before," and again, just before Wagner's Paris concerts (1860), "so my wish was to be fulfilled at last, to hear some of Wagner's music at least with full orchestra and conducted by himself."—Not having heard the *Lohengrin* excerpts in London, she cannot have heard Wagner conduct the *Freischütz* overture; it must have been that to *Euryanthe*, therefore at the third concert. It is a small and very venial slip, but teaches one to be cautious in accepting evidence even from the best-educated and most conscientious recollector.

which Wagner accepted the cordial greetings of us all; but I soon explained it to myself as a quite natural result of the depression, openly declared to us, into which the unsympathetic English episode had plunged him. As a fact, antagonism had established itself from the first between him and English society, steeped as it was in the Mendelssohn cult; an antagonism which gave rise to such absurdities in the musical critiques of the season as the following—that one could not possibly expect any good of a conductor who *actually* directed Beethoven's symphonies by heart. Brief thought, however, was given that evening to the unsatisfying state of matters musical. Almost from its commencement, the conversation hinged on the works of a philosopher whose name had suddenly ascended like a radiant planet from the neglect in which it had been hid for more than a quarter of a century. That philosopher was Arthur Schopenhauer.

"From my girlhood, when we stayed some time at Frankfort, I remembered well a little man in a grey cloak with many collars (then called chenille), whom I used to see taking his constitutional on the Main quay at the same hour every day, followed by a poodle. I also remembered being told this man was Arthur Schopenhauer, son of the authoress of the same surname, and that he was a perfect idiot. In particular an acquaintance of ours, then Senator of the free-town Frankfort and a person of high repute, was in the habit of dining at the same table d'hôte with him, and re-served us many a mocking anecdote in proof of his [the Senator's?] buffoonery. I had never heard of him since till a short while back, when reports kept dropping in from Germany that that man's works, though published many a year before, were being read at last, and he was ranked by some as the greatest philosopher after Kant, by others as far higher. I know not how Friedrich* had learnt that

* Friedrich Althaus, born at Detmold 1829; at this time a teacher in London; author of *Englische Charakterbilder* (Berlin 1870, 2 vols.) and a biography of Malwida's whilom fiancé, his brother Theodor (died 1852).—It is possible the *Neue Zeitschrift's* brief report on the first Ph. concert was by F. Althaus himself, and not by Klindworth; it is practically certain the *N.Z.'s* report on the second was, for it is signed "F. A." This second report (Apr. 6), about three times the length of the earlier one, is remarkable for little more than its statement that "Wagner was greeted warmly by orchestra and

Wagner shared this latter view, but he led the conversation up to Schopenhauer and begged Wagner for an aperçu of the root-ideas of the Schopenhauerian philosophy, of which he, too, was ignorant as yet. In the speech that followed I was particularly struck by the expression 'Denial of the will-to-life,' which Wagner represented as the final upshot of Schopenhauer's metaphysics. . . . As Man's highest ethical aim, to me it seemed quite unintelligible; yet it attracted me as if it held the key to the gate beyond which to see the light of that last knowledge toward which my life had been dimly leading me.

"The evening passed without eliciting a warmer note. I felt a dissatisfiedness with this meeting that pained me the more as I had approached the author of those writings, the conductor of that concert, with enthusiasm so ardent. Not to leave things at this first impression, I wrote a couple of lines to Wagner a little after, inviting him to come out to Richmond, as Herzen would also be delighted to make his acquaintance. Unfortunately I received a refusal, on the ground of his coming departure and the necessary preparations for it" (*ibid.* 281-5). It was very natural —as Glasenapp argues—that Wagner should decline the Richmond invitation, since there had long been a deadly feud between Herzen and his Zurich friend Georg Herwegh. One can also understand his "chill" response to the Idealist's fervour, if she expected to find in him the Feuerbachian of 'the books': he had sped beyond the doctrines of all these semi-materialist positivists, their politics too; and there can be little doubt that it was he himself who "led the conversation up to Schopenhauer" —a subject of which his London epistles are full. He did not forget to make amends, however; for he writes Frau Wesendonck from Paris, concerning Frln v. M.: "In London years ago I had treated her very badly, in a fit of ill-humour; the recollection touched me, and now she feels more at ease in my company"— confirmed by the Fräulein herself, who tells us that his first words at their re-encounter were, "I have to make my peace with you for something. I was in a very bad temper then; but it was all the fault of those English fogs." So we now possess a series of nine deeply interesting letters, written to the literary comrade

audience on his entry at the beginning of the concert." Perhaps Althaus was a friend of Klindworth's; however that may be, we do not hear of him in Wagner's life again.

and fellow-Schopenhauerian between 1860 and 67 (see *Letters to Otto &c.*). But that is looking far ahead; we must get back to dismal London.

Schopenhauer loomed large indeed against our canopy of fog, both Wagner's letter of June 7 to Liszt, and still more his letter vi to August Roeckel (dateless) containing the most luminous résumé of the pessimist philosopher's system. For that we must wait awhile, as *we* have no time to discuss it in London. Here, however, are two or three kindred indications from this period:—to Liszt, mid-March, "You and I are like saints on the rack; perhaps I shall become one wholly some day—but it will be all up for me with *art* then—that lovely playing at a last sublime concealment of the vileness of this world!" May (to L. again): "I must, I must resign myself. The reflective part of me was long since led to see the need of resignation in the fullest sense; but I have still entirely to subjugate this barbarous vital instinct which clouds my insight ever and anon, and hurls me into a chaos of contradictions. Then may I hope to mount some day from purgatory to paradise,—perhaps the keen air of my Seelisberg will help toward that. I won't deny I would gladly light on Beatrice there!" Is there need of an expounder, nowadays?—Then take that undated letter to Sulzer, part whereof was given toward the end of chapter III.:—

"The repeated experience that I can do nothing but pollute myself, i.e. offend my conscience, by any contact with this public art of ours, has more than once instilled in me the wish that I could doff my whole artistic temperament, to slay for good a longing I can never try to slake without fresh torture. But it's hard to tell, whatever would become of me if I really bade goodbye to art—presumably a Schopenhauerian saint! However, I need not crack my head on that, for I expect those artistic illusions will never quit their hold of me while a spark of life remains in my body; they're the real decoy-birds by whose means the vital instinct ever lures my intuition to its trap. . . . So this artistic temperament quite strictly is the demon that keeps on tearing me from clearest glimpses to a whirlpool of confusion, agitation and folly, and sets me in fresh contact with a world I long had really overcome; a world whose void and nullity perhaps are plainer to myself than to many another, as, with my acute responsiveness, they're bound to shew themselves to me in their wofulest aspect

at last. Thus I often pass through moments when I feel so crushed by this my intuition, that I suddenly imagine I dare live no longer. Perhaps you'll laugh if I tell you these moments are those above all when I see a dumb animal maltreated. No tongue can tell what I experience then, nor how, as if by instantaneous magic, there opens up a glimpse into the essence of all Life in its uncleft cohesion—a glimpse I recognise no more as maudlinness, but as the truest and the deepest of all possible perception; which also is the reason I've become so fond of Schopenhauer, since it was he who taught me all about it, and to my entire satisfaction. At such moments I see the 'veil of Maya' completely raised, and what my gaze beholds is terrible, so awful that—as said—it suddenly occurs to me I dare not go on living. But directly afterwards that other veil descends, with its artistic visions; a veil—however un-like it may seem—which after all is but that 'veil of Maya' in another form, and casts me wholly back again into the world of semblance."

How it all reads like a page from the Venice Diary of three to four years hence! And a direct point of contact is furnished in the letter to MATHILDE Wesendonck of April 30, '55: "Otto must at once procure you 'Indian Legends edited by A. Holtzmann.' I brought them to London with me; their reading has been my only pleasure here. All are beautiful; but—*Sawitri* is divine, and if you wish to find out my religion, read *Usinar*. How shamed stands our whole Culture by these purest revelations of the noblest humanism in the ancient East!"—Almost the whole interior history of the next seven years is summed up in that one brief passage.

But this letter drops us back once more to London gas-jets, for it ends: "To-day is my fourth concert; the A major symphony (which at any rate will not go anything like so well as at Zurich), and with it a number of lovely things I never dreamt of having to conduct again in my life. However, I'm fortified for it all by the certainty that this—will have been the last time. . . . Tomorrow, after the concert, I shall write to my wife; she won't have any mighty news to give you, though." Evidently we must take the "last time" as applying to the season as a whole, not to this particular concert; yet before the night was out it very nearly came to that, as we shall learn in good time. Meanwhile let us study the programme of Apr. 30:—

Part I.

Sinfonia in B flat, No. 3 MS.	Lucas.
Romanza, "Più bianca" (Huguenots) Herr Reichardt	Meyerbeer.
Nonetto for violin, viola, violoncello, contrabasso, flute, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon: Messrs Sainton, Hill, Lucas, Howell, Pratten, Nicholson, Williams, C. Harper, and Baumann	Spohr.
Recit., "A qual furor" } "Fidelio" Madame Clara Novello . Aria, "O tu, la cui dolce possanza" }	Beethoven.
Overture, "Ruler of the Spirits"	Weber.

Part II.

Sinfonia, No. 7	Beethoven.
Duetto, "Fra gl'amplessi" (Così fan Tutte) Madame Clara Novello and Herr Reichardt	Mozart.
Overture, "L'Alcalde de la Vega" . . .	Onslow.

Certainly the worst arranged of all the eight, and not worth summoning a man all the way from Zurich to conduct; especially as Lucas took his own symphony, and presumably Sainton had no overseer; so that in the whole concert there was nothing of importance for a first-class conductor save the Beethoven symphony! No wonder Wagner was disgusted, and—but no: we first must hunt for anything out of the way in the journalists' reports. This time the *Times* leads off, May 1:—

The programme of the fourth concert last night, although not well balanced, was full of interest [*Programme*]. The *nonetto* of Spohr, one of his best-known compositions for the chamber, was at a manifest disadvantage in the midst of so many orchestral pieces, although a finer and more elaborate work than the symphony that immediately preceded it. Music of this kind is out of place at concerts, where the full orchestra has so conspicuous a part. Nor was the execution entitled to praise. The players were all artists of repute; but either they were out of sorts, or they had not rehearsed together sufficiently often, or (which is the most difficult to believe) they felt no sympathy with Spohr. Whatever may have been the cause, we never heard the *nonetto* performed in so unsatisfactory a manner. The first movement was positively bad; the others were better, but by no means what they might have been.

The symphonies were both welcome, though as wide apart in merit as the poles. That of Mr Lucas—conducted by himself and admir-

ably played—has been written nearly a quarter of a century . . . Mr Lucas was then a young man, and great hopes were entertained of his career—hopes, it is scarcely necessary to add, which (as in so many other instances) have been disappointed [etc., etc.] . . .

Herr Wagner's mode of conducting does not seem to win upon the orchestra under his direction, nor his interpretations of the great composers to invite the adherence of connoisseurs. The overture of Weber was encored; but it was much too fast in some places, much too slow in others, and on the whole left an impression of incoherency hardly to be redeemed by the impetuous enthusiasm imparted to certain points. Beethoven's symphony in A major presented the same discrepancies. Amid much that was effective, there was still more that was questionable. Many passages came out with wonderful force; but, considered altogether, the performance was rambling and capricious. The "*allegretto*" (so called) was *andante;* the *finale*, marked "*Allegro con brio*," was *presto;* the *scherzo*, at the last repeat, was much quicker than at the beginning; and not one of the three gained by its new reading. The overture of Onslow—a dry and laboured, but extremely ingenious piece—was played, if the expression may be allowed, "faster than possible." The vocal music left but little to desire. The romance of Raoul, with viola *obbligato* (Mr Hill), one of Meyerbeer's happiest melodies, was given with exquisite feeling by Herr Reichardt, who was equally successful in the graceful duet from *Cosi fan Tutte* with Madame Clara Novello. The *scena* of Leonora (so profoundly dramatic and expressive) was sung by the same clever lady with edifying correctness.

No sign there, that anything particular had happened. Neither is there in the Philharmonic secretary's own report, unless it be that this is the first time he has appeared a day late—the *Daily News* not printing him till May 2. Hogarth is still quite pleased with everything, with Reichardt's and Clara Novello's singing, with the Nonetto, with Lucas, with Onslow, and with Wagner's conducting. Of the Nonetto he tells us that "Sainton played the principal part with a brilliancy of execution which repeatedly produced bursts of irrepressible applause, and he was admirably supported by all the other performers, every one of whom is a complete master of his instrument." Which *is* right, which wrong here?—But our chief concern is with Wagner:—

Weber's superb overture to the "Ruler of the Spirits," which terminated the first part, was played, under Herr Wagner's admirable direction, in a manner which we have never heard surpassed. It was vehemently encored, and repeated with undiminished effect.—

Beethoven's Symphony in A was of course the greatest feature of the concert. The prevailing character of this great effort of genius (especially in the first and last movements) is fiery impetuosity; and this was heightened by Wagner's manner of pressing forward (as it were) the motion of the orchestra. This rapidity was not in the least prejudicial to the clearness of the execution; we heard every phrase with the utmost distinctness; and the relaxations of the time in the *cantabile* passages had, to our feeling, an admirable effect of contrast, though some critics, we are aware, find fault with such things as being unjustifiable liberties with the composer. Such things, however, are constantly done in sonatas, quartets, etc.; and, if so, we see no good reason why they should be prohibited in symphonies. The beautiful, complaining slow movement in A minor, which presents so fine a contrast to the impetuous movement which precedes it, was given with the utmost delicacy and expression.

Hogarth also, then, betrays no sign of anything untoward; in fact, he champions Wagner quite outspokenly. The *Morning Post* having no report on this concert at all, let us try the *Sunday Times* (May 6), in which, after a long account of Lucas and the discouragement to which native composers had been exposed for twenty years, a marked 'veering' is noticeable at last:—

Mr Lucas having conducted his own symphony, which went extremely well, and was received with warm applause, the rest of the concert was directed by Herr Wagner. Beethoven's A symphony we have heard at least fifty times with more satisfaction than on this occasion. Herr Wagner does infinitely too much in the way of "reading." Beethoven's music does not want all this elaborate parade of extra fervour and sentimentality. It has innate stuff and substance of its own. Correct mechanical execution and strict attention to the composer's directions for variety, both in time and tone, must be nearly all that such music can require. Anything much beyond this, if even it does not offend by its appearance of trick and affectation, can hardly fail to impart a ragged, capricious, and uncertain effect to the performance, and this is precisely what occurred with Herr Wagner's version of the Seventh Symphony. Weber's magnificent overture suffered in a similar manner. It was injudiciously timed in important places, and its effect, on the whole, fell far short of that which we are accustomed to experience. Onslow's very clever, but not very amusing overture, went extremely well, considering the furious pace at which it was taken. Herr Richard Wagner does not elevate the impressions first created by his conducting. We neither relish his notions of what the music should be, nor perceive that he makes much progress in clearly delineating them to the orchestra

There is still that want of finished decision about the performance that might result either from the unintelligibility of his conducting or the inattention of the band. At first we thought it a compound of both these causes, which time would set to rights; but at each concert it becomes more apparent that both his ideas and his mode of expressing them are too capricious to permit a hope that the brief limit of a Philharmonic season will suffice to bring him and his orchestra into a condition of harmonious working.—Spohr's very beautiful nonetto was not well played [and so on; no more about Wagner].

So Smart, too, knows naught of any special *contretemps;* though he is rapidly falling into the ranks of the foe, as we shall remark more particularly of another article in the same issue of the *S. Times* to be dealt with later.—Chorley goes into no details whatever (*Athen.* May 5). With fine impartiality of superciliousness, he turns up his nose alike at Lucas' symphony, at "certain American Art-journals" we know of, which have been saying "many hard and cutting things concerning wicked British journalists," and at Wagner himself, "the evolutions of [whose] 'young German' bâton, diligently seconding the mismanagement of old English directors, are rapidly extinguishing such interest as might still, for awhile, have clung to the *Philharmonic Concerts*, in spite of the difficulty of varying the repertory for an audience among whom fastidiousness is cherished for religion."—Finally we have Davison again, in the *M. World* of May 5 *:—

* In the intermediate issue, Apr. 28, the column devoted to answers to correspondents (always given prominence beside or above the first leader) contains two items of interest: 1°, a reply to "*Anti-Future*," revealing the identity of the New York journal's correspondent (see p. 61 *sup.*); 2°, to "*An Admirer of 'Jewish' Music.*—We believe that Mr Buxton, representing the house of Ewer & Co. (Oxford-street), made the liberal offer of £2,000 for the remaining MSS. of Mendelssohn, which were to be submitted to a committee of the most eminent English musicians. The offer was declined! The symphony in C minor is 'No. 13' in the composer's own catalogue. One would think that Mr Paul Mendelssohn and the four active gentlemen at Leipsic were agents for Wagner and the 'Music of the Future'"—thus does the leaven work. Another page reproduces the *Morning Post's* full account of the *Lohengrin* excerpts (second concert) under the heading "Another Opinion," whilst the *Lohengrin* translation of course is pursued from this issue to that of May 5. In the latter we also have C. A. B.'s enquiry re Praeger (p. 61 *sup.*), and a leaderette: "Our clever contemporary, *The Leader*, whose musical contributor is a stanch adherent of Herr Wagner and Signor Verdi, has the following ingenious apology for the last-named composer. . . . To oppose unjust governments is one thing, to make war

The concert . . was ill attended, although the programme, as may be seen, was interesting. [*Programme.*] Mr Lucas conducted his symphony himself. It is the same which many years ago was received with high favour at the concerts of the Society of British Musicians, and though not a great work, is superior to three-fourths of the symphonies written now-a-days. . . . The whole was finely played, and well received.

Herr Wagner's conducting was as before—unsatisfactory, full of fits and starts, not always intelligible, sometimes leading to new effects and good effects, but generally incoherent. The same applies to the overture of Weber, which was encored, and the symphony of Beethoven, the second movement of which, an unusual thing, was not encored. The overture of Onslow was taken so fast that it was wonderful how the stringed instruments got to the end of it. According to Herr Wagner's invariable custom, all the second subjects, especially when *cantabile*, were taken slower than the first ; and the balance was ill-contrived by certain *crescendi* and *rallentandi*, of which Weber and Beethoven never dreamt—*crescendi* and *rallentandi*, we presume, "of the future."

The *Nonetto* of Spohr was a very unsatisfactory performance. . . . Such contrarieties, however, will happen in the best-conducted establishments. Moreover, chamber music of this kind is quite out of place in concerts where the full orchestra plays first fiddle.

The vocal music was good. Herr Reichardt sang the first romance of Raoul in the *Huguenots* with irreproachable taste, and was admirably accompanied by Mr Hill on the viola *obbligato*. The expressive duet of Mozart, from *Cosi fan Tutte*, was as well sung as could have been desired ; and Madame Clara Novello threw all her energy into the great *scena* of Leonora.

Tannhäuser at the next concert—two rehearsals not having been sufficient for so stupendous a work.

Still no sign of anything untoward ; no sign, that is, in *any* of the English papers. Yet something almost cataclysmic did take place, on Wagner's side, that evening of Apr. 30. Praeger shall be the first to tell us about it, and I have quoted all the criticisms of Reichardt's singing *and* accompaniment—"admirable" and so on—expressly that the reader may here judge for himself the strength of Praeger's memory. Quoth *As I:* "Wagner had a decided objection to long programmes . . . This programme was

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against art is another. *The Leader* does the first, and we admire it ; Herr Wagner and Signor Verdi, with weapons that bear no resemblance to each other, do the last, and we oppose them," etc. N.B. A careful search in *The Leader* has proved barren of Wagner-results.

distasteful, and what a scene did it produce! During the aria from 'Les Huguenots,' the tenor, Herr Reichardt, after a few bars' rest, did not retake his part at the proper moment, upon which Wagner turned to him,—of course without stopping the band,—whereupon the singer made gestures to the audience indicating that the error lay with Wagner. At the end of the vocal piece a slight consternation ensued. Wagner was well aware of the unfriendliness of a section of the critics, and in all probability capital would be made out of this [in the 'eighties]. At the end of the first part of the concert I went to him in the artists' room. His high-pitched excitement and uncontrolled utterances, it was easy to foresee, boded no good. And so when we reached home after the concert there ensued a positive storm of passion. Wagner at his best was impulsive and vehement; suffering from a miserable insinuation as to his incapacity, he grew furious. On one point he was emphatic,—he would return to Switzerland the next day. All entreaties and protestations were unavailing. Sainton, Lüders, and myself actually hung upon him, so ungovernable was his anger. He knew how I had suffered in the press for championing his cause. 'Chef-de-claque,' 'madman,' and 'tutto quanti' were the elegant epithets bestowed upon me in print [not yet, tho']; and if Wagner left now, the enemy would have some show of truth in charging him with admitted incompetence."—One does not catch the connection of ideas in the English, but *Wie* supplies the missing link: "All our pleas were almost fruitless, so firmly was Wagner resolved; at last I had to take the field with a reminder as to my own situation:—Had I not fallen out with the entire press? [You had, most effectually.] Was I not already the target of their accusation, that I had forced [!] the Zukunftsmusiker upon them? Did I not already bear the name of Wagner-prophet [he forgets to add, And had I not divulged the authorship of *Judaism?*],—'and now you would let yourself be moved by such trumpery, a mere comedian, to leave all your friends in the lurch, when we had been so looking forward to the Tannhäuser-overture under your direction?' But it took another couple of hours, before he promised to remain."

Alas, alas! Even the English and German sides of Praeger are at variance; instead of "a positive storm of passion ensuing when we reached home," Wagner had "somewhat cooled down" ere the end of the concert in the latter's story, and his country-

men are cruelly robbed of the picture of "Sainton, Lüders and myself" hanging on to the wrathful one's coat-tails—with a piled cab seen darkly through the doorway. Thus are they mulcted for the privilege of hearing P.'s chief argument, the force whereof it took the martyr two whole hours to drub into his protégé. Let him proceed for half-a-dozen English lines, though, since they will bring us nearer to the truth: "A distorted report of this event [with or without coat-tails?] appearing in certain German musical papers, he wrote an explanatory letter to Dresden, in which he stated, 'I need not tell you that it was only the entreaties of *Ferdinand Praeger and* those friends who accompanied me home, that dissuaded me from my somewhat impulsive determination'" (*As I* p. 254).—The italics here are mine; the words printed therein are Praeger's; Wagner did not write them: the rest of the quoted part he did. At that "explanatory letter" we shall arrive in a moment, but in parenthesis one asks, *However* do these things get into the papers? And not the English papers, mind you.

That some form or other of the story, or rather of a kindred story, did appear in "certain German musical papers" (had P. but given us their names!), is an historic fact; for Liszt writes von Bülow, June 10: "As no doubt you know, the news of Wagner's precipitate return to Zurich is simply nothing but a *canard*, about as true as that of my departure for America (!)" * Those dear sweet German papers—no matter whether printed in Vienna or Cologne—with what gusto must they not have pounced on someone's 'indiscretion'—no matter whose! For Liszt had written Wagner himself June 2: "When are you returning to Zurich? At Düsseldorf [mus. festival] they said you had left London

* The *Musical World* has a paragraph June 30: "LISZT AND WAGNER.—The following announcement has appeared in the *Neue Berliner Musik-Zeitung*:—'The undersigned is empowered to rectify certain fabrications circulated in various newspapers and other prints, with reference to Herr Dr. Franz Liszt and *Capellmeister* Richard Wagner, by stating that there was never the slightest intention on the part of Herr Dr. Liszt to proceed to America and give up his appointment as Grand-ducal *Hof-Capellmeister*, nor any idea on the part of *Capellmeister* Wagner to leave London previous to the eighth and last Philharmonic concert (which will take place on the 25th instant), since he has undertaken personally to direct the whole series. HANS *v.* BÜLOW. *Berlin, 16th June*, 1855.'" This is the sole reference to the subject in the English press, which is thus shewn to have heard nothing of those rumours until *after* R. Wagner's departure.

already! Philistia the envious rejoiced at those tidings exceedingly, which I, however, took no small glee in spoiling for her. *Whatsoever* may befall, and *howsoever*, I implore you *hold on* and *hold out*. '*Poeta sovrano*,' as Dante says of Homer, you must stride onward unruffled '*si come sire*.' The common herd are simply no concern of yours.—Just write your Nibelungen, and content yourself with immortality of life!" I will not anticipate the substance of Wagner's reply of June 7, in itself most eloquent of thanks for such enheartening; suffice it here to say, it ends with the briefest answer to that query, supremely ignoring Philistia, a mere "I leave on the 26th, and consequently am holding—out!"

Earlier lines to Liszt, the 16th May, had broached the London incident itself: "It is *quite* another thing if I give friends a Beethovenian symphony to hear from time to time, but to be an invested conductor like this, to whose house one packs off scores of concert-pieces etc. for him to beat time to—I'm bound to feel *that* as the deepest of shame! This it was, the complete anomaly of my position, that drove me at last, after the 4th concert, to the resolve to ask for my demission. Naturally I was talked out of it at once, and consideration for my wife above all—who would have been filled with dismay by so abrupt a surrender and what would have been written thereon—has determined me to hold out till the last concert."

Here we see that, over a fortnight after the 4th concert (two days, in fact, after the 5th), Wagner has heard nothing as yet of any leakage of the incident into the press. But it is the said letter to Fischer which gives at once the full account, and fills us with astonishment that Praeger could quote from this letter itself and in the same breath so utterly transform its minor episode of the "singer R."—at least, no: it does *not* astonish us, but would in any other writer. Here, then, is Wagner's full account of June 15 to Fischer, which the latter injudiciously communicated whole to Brendel, and B. in his turn published in the *Neue Zeitschrift* of July 1 without the least attempt at editing:—"As for the false rumours of a quarrel of mine with the directors of the Philharmonic society here, and my consequent departure from London, they repose entirely on the following incident.* When I passed into the cloak-room after the 4th

* The reader is begged to suspend judgment a little longer.

concert I found a few friends there, to whom I expressed my intense irritation and anger at having consented to become conductor of such concerts at all, as it really was not in my line; these endless programmes, with their mass of vocal and instrumental pieces, tired me out and tortured my æsthetic sense.* I had been forced to see the impossibility of effecting any kind of change or moderation in face of settled habits, and consequently nursed a grudge, directed more against my having embarked on such a thing again—much less against the conditions themselves here, which I strictly knew beforehand—but least of all against my audience, which had always received me with kindness and distinction, often even with great warmth. On the other hand, the revilings of the London critics were a matter of perfect indifference to me, as their onslaughts simply proved to all the world I had not bribed them; in fact it amused me to notice how they always kept the door ajar, so that the smallest overture from my side would have made them change their tune—an act, of course, I did not dream of." †—It is by no

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* Please turn two pages back, to pick up the thread of *As I* where we dropped it at the quoted word "determination." That word is directly followed by a fresh paragraph, where *Ferdinandus ipse loquitur:* "At the fifth concert, 14th May, the 'Tannhäuser' overture was performed. It came at the end of the first part of another of those long programmes which Wagner disliked so much. In a letter to me to Brighton, where I had gone for a few days, he writes: 'These endless programmes, with these interminable masses of instrumental and vocal pieces, torture me.' The programme of the fifth concert was:—" etc. You will hardly be able to check this with the German version, as Messrs Breitkopf and Haertel withdrew that years ago, but I will do so for you: "At the fifth concert he had a brilliant compensation for the foolish episode at the fourth! The programme again was an endless one, and caused him a perfect torment of hell" (detailed programme follows). That is the whole German equivalent; the apocryphal "letter to me to Brighton" has been noiselessly dropped! We now know what it *was*, however—see above: another morsel from that same printed letter *to Fischer* in which Praeger had interpolated his own full name three sentences higher up. But how touching, that he and Wagner could not be parted "for a few days" without epistolary correspondence so intimate that this stale molecule alone is fit for publication! On the other hand, we may accept without much demur P.'s remark that these long programmes reminded Wagner "of the cry of the London omnibus conductors, 'full inside,'" as P. substantiates it with that tiny note to Madame signed "Richard Wagner, Conductor d'omnibus de la Société Philharmonique, 1855" (see cap. III.).

† At the year's end he writes Liszt (following that remark—cap. I.—about

means clear whether Wagner intends the above as the purport of his remarks in that cloak-room, or a private digression; probably a little of both. He continues:—"On that evening, however, I had been thoroughly enraged by having to conduct a poor vocal piece and a trivial overture of Onslow's after Beethoven's A major symphony; in deepest dudgeon I told my friends aloud (you know my way) that I had conducted for the very last time, should take my discharge next day, and travel home. A concert-singer R.—a young German Jew—happened to be standing by; he caught my remarks, and appears to have conveyed them all hot to a newspaper scribe [*hat sie jedenfalls auch* etc.—pure surmise, of course]. So these rumours are running through the German journals since, and have misled even you. I hardly need tell you that the representations of my friends, who escorted me home, succeeded in dissuading me from a resolution hastily conceived in wrath."

It will be observed that Praeger's name does not occur at all here; only twice is it mentioned in *any* letter to Fischer—once as a mere provisional London address, a "c/o," and again as a mere item among the Asyl visitors of '57. But I fear P. himself was unintentional, tho' scarcely innocent, cause of the false rumours aforesaid. I have mentioned that not one of the London journals of the period has a word to say of this ebullition of temper, of a "quarrel with the directors," or even of a contemplated resignation. Herr Reichardt must have chosen a very roundabout course, if he shot his bolt across the German Ocean, over the heads of his friends the enemy in London; also, he must have been very slow about it, as neither Liszt nor Fischer gets wind of these rumours before the *end* of May, i.e. a month after the 4th concert itself. Wagner's surmise, itself perhaps Praeger-instilled, must therefore be dismissed as not quite tenable. A more plausible source is to be found in the mid-May issue of the *M. World*—a journal with innumerable foreign correspondents, and therefore continental readers. Turn back to our own page 223 and you will meet these words: "The Philharmonic Directors have gone to considerable pains and expense to bring a conductor all the way from Zurich, and their object, in bringing

his "salutary punishment" for having published the *Faust*-overture): "I had the same religious feeling in London, when mud was being flung at me from every side; it was the most healing mud that ever touched me."

his works before the public, is to 'secure him a *fiasco!*'" That is Davison's ironical comment on Dreisterner's Lohengrin-fable; but it only needed an ounce of ill-will—a commodity of which contemporary German papers had enough and to spare—to turn the combination into an open "quarrel," with its logical corollary, and the whole crop of false rumours would be easily accounted for without the aid of any London "Jew."

Another disagreeable sequel to the 4th concert might be traced with greater likelihood to cloak-room eavesdroppers, i.e. to overhearers of Wagner's probable remarks on English music, should anyone oppugn the theory that Parallax's tongue kept tempo with the strictures of his pen on Smart and Lucas.* For Smart now follows Chorley's lead in demolition of two pirated

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* Dreisterner's Lucas-boomerang did not, of course, recross the herring-pond till the Philh. season was at its last gasp; but here is its reproduction in the *M. Wd* of Saturday, June 23: "Speaking of great mistakes, leads us to think of the Old Philharmonic Society, the programme of which opened with a MS. symphony in B flat, by Mr Lucas, one of the directors, and a member of the orchestra, who ["very prudently," interposes Davison] conducted his own work. There are few aspirants—not excepting country organists, band-masters of regiments, and even musical village school-masters—who have not, at one time of their life, tried their hand at making a symphony; and no doubt it is alluding to *these kind* [evidently italicised by Dn, who adorns it with "!"] of compositions that the *Musical World* says, that Mr Lucas's symphony is as good as three-fourths of the symphonies lately written. We grant that, but should have preferred one from the remaining fourth, with ideas, intention, and organic life in it; this work, a long if not great work, reminded us that butter is sold in Spain by the yard—but we do not like music by the yard." Though not in Dreisterner's absolutely worst form, it was a sorry preparation for Wagner's farewell concert on the following Monday; more particularly as Davison—to change the metaphor—culled further flowers from this privet-hedge: "Spohr's Nonetto *is mere musical twaddle* . . . Onslow's overture was of a piece with the just named selection"; "Had it not been for the *magnificent interpretation* of Beethoven's symphony, the reading of which by Richard Wagner was *marvellous for the most soul-felt and inspired conception*, we should have fallen asleep, notwithstanding Mad. Novello's singing the great aria from *Fidelio*, which *is a sealed book to her*, excepting the mere *vocalisation of it* in the narrowest sense ["of course"—says the *M. Wd* ed.—"Mad. Novello is an Englishwoman"], and Reichardt's 'Più bianca,' an ineffective song for *the concert;*" "The more we see of the wonders Wagner works with the orchestra, by forcing *them* to express what he feels, the more we can only compare *it* to the fable of Prometheus animating *insensible beings* with the holy fire"—the italics naturally being Davison's. Certainly Dreisterner kept no door ajar.

"songs," without a word of censure for the pirates. Chorley had already written, *Ath.* March 31: "That we may not be accused of caricaturing, when our purpose is to offer a fair picture, let us refer those who have any curiosity to examine farther to two separate *Opera Airs* (as they are called) from the series now in [uninvited] publication by Messrs Ewer:—one, No. 4, 'Wie Todesahnung' from 'Tannhäuser'; the other, No. 5, 'Athmest du nicht mit mir' from 'Lohengrin.' We have heard the former spoken of throughout 'Young Germany' (Dr Liszt has written of it) as something equal to the best of Schubert's *Lieder*—that is, to Schubert's 'Ave Maria,' 'Ständchen,' 'Ungeduld.' The pass at which tolerance and partizanship can arrive, can hardly be more instructively tested than by verifying such a comparison" (one would have liked to be present when Chorley re-met Dr Liszt at Düsseldorf, the end of May *). Now for the results of Smart's adoption of Chorley's hint, the *Sunday Times* of May 6—in addition to its report on the concert of six days previously (*vid. sup.*)—proceeding to "verify the comparison" at portentous length, which I must dock to its half:—

The more we see and hear of Herr Richard Wagner, the more are we convinced of the soundness of our first opinion, that, however extraordinary a man he may be in other things, to whatever extent he may possess the general impulse of the artist, music is not his special birthgift—is not for him an articulate language, or a beautiful form of expression. We have examined the two compositions under notice with unusual care, anxious to catch any glimpse of this "music of the future," which is to redeem all the short-comings of the past—determined, if possible, to discover the source of that mystic light which is, we are told, fast making its way into every nook and cranny of the old German mind, and is destined thereout to banish all the accumulated darkness of the two last centuries. We may be unfortunate, or we may be dense. We may not have secured the key

* April 1851, Liszt writes Pss Wittgenstein, "Following the good example you set me with Chorley, I did not fail to turn the railway-journey to account by doing my best to indoctrinate" so-and-so. The only further references to C. in that correspondence are the following:—Düsseldorf, May 27, 55: "Among other arrivals I hear talk of Chorley, Marschner, etc.;" May 29, "Schumann's great merit decidedly lies in his distinction of style. He has certain ways of saying certain things [in music] as others knew not how to say them . . . As for Chorley, he does not mince matters, and finds that *Paradise and the Peri* is a '*Paradise lost.*'" It would appear that they were still on speaking terms, then.

to this great music-mystery, or we may be in that state of invincible ignorance impolitely termed obstinacy; but, be it as it may, we are, on the evidence before us, forced to adopt one of two conclusions—either Richard Wagner is a desperate charlatan, endowed with worldly skill and vigorous purpose enough to persuade a gaping crowd that the nauseous compound he manufactures has some precious inner virtue, that they must live and ponder yet more ere they perceive; or else he is a self-deceived enthusiast, who thoroughly believes his own apostolic mission, and is too utterly destitute of any perception of musical beauty to recognise the worthlessness of his credentials. It may be objected that neither of such strong conclusions can be justified on the evidence of two small songs—that they are the vagabonds, the mere waifs and strays of a great man's invention—and that by his large works alone can his position in art be fairly estimated. Obvious as is such an objection, it is but so partially true that we cannot permit its interference in the present case. Take the small published songs of such men as the whole world has consented to dignify—say Mozart, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn. We find in them nothing ugly, awkward, unmusical. . . .

Now, looking at Herr Wagner's two songs in this spirit, distrustful of the probability that Liszt, and half Germany, have gone mad, and sincerely anxious to discover all or any part of what they profess to admire, we are obliged to own our conviction that these compositions are remarkable only for the absence of everything that has been deemed beautiful in music, added to the presence of some of the most intolerable offences to which either the ear or the principles of harmony need ever be subjected. Of rhythmic melody they have but the faintest trace — of its commoner form, tune, they are absolutely destitute. If it were possible to extract from either of these songs two consecutive bars which the memory could, for an instant, retain, it would be only because the privileged phrase was as wholly familiar and common-place as the "ifs" and "ands" of conversation. Once, indeed (in the last movement of the second song), the composer ventures out of this monotonous kind of "plain song" in quest of some freer-handed tune; but it is only to perpetrate such a dismal *suite* of melodic progressions that the singer need well be without ears who would attempt its correct execution, and his auditors had better share the defect if they would promise its patient endurance. [This of the *Abendstern!* How unaccustomed they must have been to semitones in those days.]

But, unmeaning, absurd, even disagreeable, as is the voice-part of these songs, their harmonic structure—form, in the technical sense of the word, they have none—is still more reprehensible. It reminds us of nothing but the "extemporizing" of some man who, ignorant of music, has discovered a number of chords on the pianoforte, and

straightway proceeds to string them together, wholly insensible to their want of mutual relation.

Smart proceeds to vivisect the victims, at equal leisure with the above, summoning a terrible array of cyphers to chalk up their succession of chords—cyphers alarming enough to the layman even if they denoted the simplest and most highly respected of harmonic relations. Speaking of the transition between the recitative and arioso of the "Abendstern," says he: "And now comes one of the most barbarous things which listeners of ordinary sensitiveness are likely, in much experience, to encounter. . . . And all this cacophony for what?" Never mind his technical answer, for the hapless wight betrays himself as without the first qualification for judging vocal music, a voice of his own or one lent him: "This second movement we have already alluded to, for the especial ugliness of its theme, and we may safely challenge any one to play it over without wincing." A couple more sentences conduct us to the peroration:—

And we are really to accept this wild senseless dabbling about among chords, without form, without idea, invention, expression, as music! As music, too, which is to make us think of Mendelssohn only as the "Jew," and of Mozart and Beethoven—the rest utterly out of sight—as mere timid hangers on about those portals of truth, through which, first and foremost of the world, Richard Wagner has hewn his way! The time has long past for such absurdities to prevail. That they may partially succeed in a country where men expend so much of their lives in investigating the mechanism of thought that they have no time left for its use, we can believe; but they will fail in England. The public, in deference to their own ears, will not accept them, and the English musicians are infinitely too well educated to permit their convictions to be shaken by such a poor form of heresy as this. Speaking of these two songs in particular, we do not hesitate to pronounce them *not music at all* [! ! !]. If a joke is intended in their publication, it is a bad one; but if put forth seriously, their author must be either one of the most daring quacks, or one of the most self-deluded beings in existence.

We have been unusually serious about what would seem an unworthy matter, because we deem the occasion ripe, and the time for speaking out all too long delayed. At a period when English musicians find the utmost difficulty in procuring publicity for their works, or the slightest recognition of their claims to notice [there's the rub], we have had another foreigner foisted on us still further to mystify the public, still more to divert their attention from the just

claims of their artist-countrymen. As a conductor, Herr Wagner has done nothing more than half a dozen Englishmen would have done better; and, in the matter of composition, it would be a scandal to compare him with the men of reputation this country possesses. Scarcely the most ordinary ballad writer but would shame him in the creation of melody, and we sincerely hope no English harmonist of more than a year's growth could be found sufficiently without ears and education to pen such vile things as we have now had occasion to notice.

That was reproduced entire in the famous *M. Wd* of May 12, and probably had more influence for harm on Wagner's position and prospects, in England, than any other attack on him during his stay here. And that might easily have been avoided, had he but listened to the wiser of his London counsellors, as said before. I believe H. Smart to have been sincere in his opinion: but on the one hand, a personal hearing of those "songs," even with the small remains of voice the mists of Regent's Park had left to their composer, would have taught S. not to trust to mere pianoforte impressions; on the other, Native Talent might never have turned so pugnacious, had it not been for Dreisterner's ill-bred thrustings of the tongue at it.

Weimar shall be our corrective; Weimar with Liszt and Princess Carolyne in their most lovable mood, under the chastening influence of private troubles. We have had one fragment from Liszt's letter of May 2, reaching Wagner in the thick of these London bear-baitings; here are two or three sentences more: "On my return from my Hungarian trip I will bring you my Mass, with a pile of my symphonic grindings, a good half whereof will be engraved by then. And even if my scores should weary you, it won't prevent my sipping *wonnigliche Labung* [Wlk.] from your creations, and you will not deny me the treat of singing me the whole of Rheingold and the Walküre.—Meanwhile all other things musical seem 'balderdash' to me.—How are you enjoying London? . . . In our abominable conditions, how should enthusiasm, love, or art, have true effect?—Patience and deprivation, is the word—to it we'll sing [the Hollander's cry]. Forgive my being so flat an echo of yourself—and let us pass the irremediable by. . . . Your letter about the *sonata* delighted me hugely, and I crave pardon for not having thanked you at once; but you really are so near me at times, I

easily forget to write you—especially as I often lack the temperature to correspond with yours." Carolyne too, May 7: "Dear poet, precious friend, our hearts are with you, suffer with you—you know it, cannot have a moment's doubt of it. Do send us news soon. And forgive me if in the midst of your preoccupations of heart and smart I beg of you a trifle; it will cost you so little, so infinitely little, to grant it me—and you might confer such great delight thereby!—Is it not the minstrel's lot, and sometimes that of women, to give a thing they have not—happiness? . . [Petition for an autograph of "Nicht Gut, nicht Gold, etc."] . . I clasp your two hands in mine, dear, great and precious man!" Six weeks before, the warm-hearted princess had sent another pretty billet, allegorising on its red border as "the emblem of love, the purple of kings, the image of life's blood . . . To yourself as to me 'tis the symbol of those wounds Fate rains on our existence, all impotent to reach our souls . . . Your love is very precious to us; preserve it us; 'tis a sun on our starless horizon.—God be with you; our hearts are ever." And Wagner to Liszt, May 16—presumably having sent the coveted autograph meantime: "And how is the princess; *leidvoll und freudvoll?* [Egmont.] Does she still maintain her white-heat of enthusiasm?"

'Twas relief indeed, to hear from some enthusiast on a plane at all nearing his own; for the same post, with Carolyne's second letter, must have brought him one from good old Fischer—a hint about the awful muddling of his publication venture at Dresden—and he has to devote the best part of a morning to an attempt at setting crooked Meser straight: "The pianoforte Tannhäuser without words hasn't appeared even yet—an irreparable loss; and here in London, I've been told, the pfte score of the Holländer has been ordered but not procured, because the old edition was sold out: so the preparation of a new one was never thought of!" That is the way he was treated all along, through civic disability to enforce his rights in person; yet the Dresden tradesmen had no sooner smelt his Philharmonic fee, than old bills were pressed for payment (letters 41, 42 and 46 to F.). Meantime "I'm jogging fairly melancholy on, in a totally foreign, antipathetic world, simply looking forward to the end of June and my return to my dear Switzerland, which I hope I shall never leave again."

The fifth concert approaches, bringing the *Tannhäuser* overture, two rehearsals whereof, *teste* Davison, had already preceded the fourth; which looks as if the overture had been tried over at rehearsals for the last two concerts. That being the case, this work of Wagner's obtained *three* rehearsals in all; none too many. "How those violin passages on the fourth string"—quoth *As*—"worried the instrumentalists! But as Lipinski had done at Dresden, so Sainton did now in London, and fingered the passages for each individual performer." Whether he "fingered" or not, Sainton naturally did his utmost to assist his comrade, the conductor, though the Dresden simile has no particular vraisemblance. "The concert room was well filled," depones P.; but let us first have the programme of this May 14:—

Part I.

Sinfonia in E flat	Mozart.
Aria, "Agitato" (I Fuorusciti), Signor Belletti .	Paer.
Concerto in E minor, Pfte, Mr C. Hallé . .	Chopin.
Aria, "Martern aller Arten" (Die Entführung aus dem Serail), Mdlle Jenny Ney, by kind permission of the Directors of the Royal Italian Opera	Mozart.
Overture, "Tannhäuser"	Wagner.

Part II.

Sinfonia Pastorale	Beethoven.
Romanza, "Roberto! O du den ich liebe" (Robert le Diable), Mdlle Jenny Ney	Meyerbeer.
Barcarola, "Sulla poppa del mio brik" (La prigione di Edinburgo), Signor Belletti . .	Ricci.
Overture, "Preciosa"	Weber.

As shall start us off, this time, since it is rather amusing: "At the close of the overture tumultuous applause followed, the audience rising and waving handkerchiefs; indeed, Mr Anderson informed me that he had never known such a display of excitement at a Philharmonic concert where everything was so staid and decorous." Mr Anderson is unlikely to have addressed the "Professor" at all after that concert, except in anger, as only two days earlier the *M. Wd* had reprinted P.'s aforesaid "bold assertion" that the directors were conspiring against Wagner. As for handkerchiefs, probably half-a-crown would have bought the lot of those "waved" by an audience "so staid and decorous";

whilst the "rising" must have occurred on the overture's repetition at the 7th concert, when loyal subjects naturally stood up as the Queen retired temporarily at end of the first part. But we will check this 'too emotional version of the proceedings' by Wagner's own.

"At the 5th concert"—he tells Fischer in the letter lately cited—"we had the Tannhäuser overture, which was very well played, kindly received by the audience, no doubt, but not yet rightly understood." No waving of handkerchiefs here, unless behind his back, and while the overture was still in progress.—The very day after the concert he writes Sulzer (May 15): "I shall bring 1000 fr. savings from London with me; more is impossible, and I assure you this is the sourest money I've earned in all my life—the hack-work I did for my Paris music-publisher in days gone by, humiliating as it was, seems child's-play compared with it. I can honestly say, I have had to pay for each of these 1000 francs with a feeling of bitterness I hope never to be obliged to experience again.—My greatest thanks for your unshakeable friendship and sympathy." No indication of "tumultuous applause" reaped the night before. Neither is there in the longish letter to Liszt of the day following that (May 16): "I'm living here like a lost soul in hell. Never did I think to fall so low again! It is impossible to describe how ashamed of myself I feel for putting up with a relation so entirely repulsive to me. . . . I scarcely need dilate to you on my present situation; it is the logical consequence of the greatest inconsistency I ever committed. That has brought me to the conducting of an English concert-programme to its dregs! Need I say more? I have waded to the centre of a swamp of habits and conventions, in the which I must remain plunged to the ears without the power to lead a runnel of fresh water into it for my refreshment. 'My dear Sir, we're not accustomed to it' is the everlasting echo in my head!—Even the band can yield me no set-off; it consists of almost none but Englishmen, i.e. skilled machines never to be got into the proper swing. Artisanship and the tradesman spirit stifle everything. An audience much inclined towards me—as I hear from right and left—yet which can never be dragged out of itself, and accepts the most stirring production in just the same mood as the dullest, without anywise betraying that it has gained a genuine impression." That settles it: Mr Anderson had never—but in a different sense of "had" and

"never"—"known such a display of excitement at a Philharmonic concert where everything was so staid and decorous."

Let us hear what the secretary says. It rather looks as if he, too, had seen that "bold assertion" reprinted by the *M. Wd* two days before the concert; for his attitude towards the overture to *Tannhäuser* is quite unusually stand-off, and for the first time he allows himself to demur to a point of conducting * (*Daily News*, May 16):—

Mozart's symphony in E flat is one of his most charming orchestral compositions, remarkable for the flowing sweetness of its melodies, and the richness of its effects produced by the use of the soft wind instruments. It was, on the whole, exceedingly well played, though it seemed to us that the beautiful andante was taken too slow. It was, at all events, much slower than the Philharmonic audience is accustomed to ["My dear Sir," etc.], and the consequence was that it did not make the same impression as usual. The glorious pastoral symphony was performed in a manner which did the highest honour both to the conductor and the band. We never heard all the various effects of this inimitable work more clearly and beautifully brought out. The "rivulet scene" was deliciously fresh, and the storm raged with a fury quite tremendous.

The object of the greatest curiosity was the overture of Wagner's celebrated opera, *Tannhäuser*—a work respecting which public [say, journalist] opinion in Germany is carried to opposite extremes, it being on the one hand applauded to the skies as being full of originality and poetry, and on the other unmercifully ridiculed as a mass of absurdities. This was the first time it has been performed in this country in such a manner as to enable any judgment to be formed of its merits. It was directed by its composer; more than usual care was bestowed upon its rehearsals; and an explanation of its design was inserted in the programme. We do not, however, feel able to pronounce an opinion of it. Before this can be done it must be heard more than once; and we believe it will produce an effect in a theatre, and in connexion with the drama to which it is a prelude, which can never be given to it in a concert-room [Its composer thought the contrary]. According to our present impression, it wants form, symmetry, and that clear rhythmical melody which ought to be found in every description of music. Where there is a melodious phrase, it

* Wagner's retrospect on the rehearsal (probably held that fatal Saturday, May 12, of *M. World* memories): "The directors were so intimidated by the critics' fury that I once was actually asked by them to be so good as let the second movement of Mozart's symphony in E flat be scurried in the way they were accustomed to, and as Mendelssohn himself, you know, had taken it" (*P.* IV. 307).

is generally overpowered and lost in a mass of intricate accompaniments. There are things in it, however, which must at once strike the hearer as beautiful, particularly the soft and solemn strain of wind instruments with which it opens, intended to represent the hymn of a procession of pilgrims; and the whole piece certainly shows, like the music of Berlioz, a great command over the resources of instrumentation.

Mr Hallé's performance of Chopin's Concerto was a treat of the highest order. . . . The vocal music was admirable. Mdlle. Ney fully supported her reputation as one of the greatest singers in Europe. Her voice we believe to be absolutely unrivalled, both in power and beauty; and she possesses, in the highest degree, intelligence, feeling, style, execution—every quality of a consummate artist . .* she made an immense impression on the audience. Belletti is, most deservedly, one of the greatest favourites of the public, and was received with the applause which he so justly deserved. The room was very full; and the audience showed themselves much gratified by this interesting concert.

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* Concerning Frau Bürde-Ney, then singer at the Dresden court-theatre, we may gather that old Fischer had asked his friend to call on her, for Wagner writes early in April, "I will see the Ney," and again May 10 (letter 40, dated by this passage itself): "I have called on the Ney, also heard her in Fidelio; in which she did not meet my expectations. She will sing to-night in Verdi's Trovatore, in which she certainly is more in place and has already had an extraordinary success at rehearsal, as I have heard from the orchestra [Sainton]. She is not allowed to sing at concerts during her engagement at the Opera." She did get leave, however, as shewn by the official programme, and Wagner writes F. once more (no. 43, end of May or early June), "The Ney has sung at one of our concerts, and her voice and method certainly surprised and pleased me!!"—finally, June 15, "I will convey your regards to the Ney." Let us hope that, when Wagner paid that farewell call, the lady had heard nothing of the *M. Wd* of June 9: "The man of Hamm was at the opera [gala night for Louis and Eugénie, Apr. 19, *Fidelio*], invisible—and, invisible, feared no man—and, fearing no man, writ as follows:—'Since my last, the Italian Opera has commenced its season with a new *prima donna*, Mad. Ney-Bürde, from Dresden, who has a fine voice and a good method, but lacks both feeling and artistic mind to make her a first-rate artist; being, at the same time, anything but prepossessing, she is not likely to prove a great attraction . . . *Fidelio wanted* so much, that it will be better to state what it *had* only—and that was Formes . . .' Preserve us from invisible critics!"—adds Davison—"What place did the Professor, who though invisible was yet substantial, occupy? Every seat was filled; and still *he* was not seen." Nothing could more clearly prove Wagner's non-complicity in Dreisterner's detractions, than this piece of ungallantry, for Frau Ney is one of those artists who accepted the master's proposals for a German Opera in Paris with alacrity a few years after (letter of Jan. 1, 60, *R. W. to M. Wk*, and *W.-L. Corr.* May 31, 60).

We will follow Hogarth to the *Illustrated* of May 19, to piece together the semi-official verdict on Wagner's overture after a hearing which *must* have been repeated more than once, as we may take it for granted that the secretary attended the "rehearsals" of which he has spoken above:—

The concert . . was very fully attended. It was of remarkable excellence, both in the instrumental and vocal departments. . . . The overture to Wagner's much-talked-of opera, "Tannhäuser," was performed under the direction of the composer, the conductor of the Philharmonic Concerts. It was most carefully executed, and listened to with much curiosity and interest [no handkerchiefs]. Opinions were much divided with respect to its merits. Some deemed it, though wild and eccentric, a work of originality and genius, while others condemned it *in toto*. For ourselves, we did not, nor do we now, feel disposed to speak dogmatically. Every one acquainted with music is aware of the uncertainty of hasty opinions, and their liability to be changed by better acquaintance with the subject. We found in this composition some beautiful and striking effects, mingled with (as it seemed to us) much obscurity and confusion; but how far this obscurity may be dissipated by further hearing we do not at present pretend to know."

Hogarth had been preceded, May 15, by the *Morning Post* man. After setting forth the programme, Glover dashes *in medias res*:—

We are perfectly willing to consider a work from any point of view which an author may require, and review it according to its pretension. . . . Still, there are immutable general principles and inherent rules, the violation of which can never be tolerated. Whatever be the prominent idea—whatever be the means employed in musical composition—the writer must still be subject to the laws which the art itself imposes, and without which it cannot exist. His work must be *music* properly so called, before it can be received as the legitimate expression of any idea; for, if not, however he may theorise or dream, the realisation of his conceptions will be simply impossible. These reflections were forced upon us by an audition of Herr Wagner's overture to his opera of "Tannhäuser" last night. The discrepancy between the really poetical description of the author's purpose, and the musical illustration of it, was well calculated to make one philosophise. Picturesque ideas, charmingly expressed in words, were completely obscured by a succession of the most unhappy experiments we ever listened to. A few bars at the commencement, effectively instrumented for clarionets, bassoons and horns, may be praised; but, after these, we had nothing

but "confusion worse confounded." Destitute of melody, extremely bad in harmony, utterly incoherent in form, and inexpressive of any intelligible ideas whatever, we must, even whilst duly appreciating the composer's professed intention, set down this overture as a most contemptible performance. If it be a foreshadowing of the "music of the future," Polyhymnia is doomed to sing in purgatory of the direst kind, for none but a terribly tormented soul could send forth such shocking sounds.

Herr Wagner's conducting too, on this occasion was far from satisfactory. The whole of Mozart's symphony was taken much too slow, except the last movement, which was taken as much too fast. The opening *allegro* and storm movements of the "Pastorale" were well executed, but the "Andante con Molto moto" was played too slow, and the concluding *allegretto* too fast, so much so, indeed, as to render a distinct articulation of the florid passages assigned to the violas and violoncellos impossible. [Chopin par. and one on vocalists.]

The overture to "Preciosa," familiar as it must be to every member of the magnificent Philharmonic band, could scarcely fail to go well; and as it is one of Weber's least admirable orchestral works, and Herr Wagner's "Tannhäuser" was a novelty, at least at these concerts, we have no objection to offer to the former composition having been placed last in the programme, although the merits of the two being duly weighed, it was certainly entitled to precedence.

The rooms were well attended.

So Glover's 'veering' is complete by now, and the last puff of wind that set this Native Talent dead against Wagner must be sought once again in the *M. World* of three days earlier, which reproduced the ensuing notice on a New Philharmonic concert with the rest of the "sole champion's" follies: "The plan of the Society to give works by natives is highly commendable; but the choice of a selection from Mr Charles Horsley's *Comus* was scarcely endurable. Mr Horsley conducted his own work in a kind of frantic, bombastic manner and a more common-place stringing together of well-known bits of tunes, a more unartistic and vulgar scoring could not well be imagined. If there are no better specimens of the Young-England school, we should advise them to do anything else than complain of neglect." While Wagner was on his trial before an English jury, so to speak, could anything have been more calamitous than this incessant abuse of things English from the mouth of his self-proclaimed advocate?

May 16 Davison takes up the tale, in the *Times*:—

A stranger performance of Mozart's symphony was never heard. The *allegro* was throughout too slow, but the first theme, which depends so much upon a flowing and unimpeded movement, was given in a manner that set not only tradition, but musical sentiment, at defiance. There is no indication whatever in Mozart's score for so abrupt a contrast between the opening *motivo* and the rest. The *andante*—of all slow movements the most beautiful, if melody, as we believe, constitutes the principal charm of music—was robbed of its character altogether by the tedious prolixity of the *tempo* Herr Wagner thought proper to indicate. The *minuetto* and *trio* were equally at variance with the reading consecrated by more than half a century; while the *finale*—singular to relate, after so much provoking slowness in the first three movements—was taken quicker than we ever heard it, so quick, indeed, that the stringed instruments at times could scarcely master the passages allotted them, easy as they are in comparison with those to be found in modern symphonies. There cannot be any objection to an intelligent musician introducing his own conceptions of the works of great masters, but in the present instance we were not merely admonished that the idea hitherto entertained of Mozart's E flat symphony in this country was a mistaken one, but that Mozart himself was in error when he affixed the terms "*allegro*" to his first movement, "*andante*" to the second, "*allegretto*" to the third, and "*allegro*" to the last. According to Herr Wagner, the first movement should be *moderato*, the second *adagio*, the third *andante*, and the fourth *prestissimo!* The Pastoral Symphony was a great deal better, and the conductor seemed to be more at home. But even in this liberties were taken, which, had the effect been good, might have passed unnoticed, but, since it was not good, only elicited a protest. The performance generally, though energetic and spirited, was anything but finished, and by no means equal to what has been heard on former occasions at the Philharmonic Concerts.

Of the overture to *Tannhauser*—one of Herr Wagner's operas—we have already spoken [see cap. II.], and the execution last night gave us no cause to modify our first impression. A more inflated display of extravagance and noise has rarely been submitted to an audience; and it was a pity to hear so magnificent an orchestra engaged in almost fruitless attempts at accomplishing things which, even if readily practicable, would lead to nothing. [Hallé; Chopin] . . Away from his "*nocturnes*" and "mazurkas," he became as trivial and incoherent [!] as in those attractive trifles he was earnest and individual. [Singers] . . in the *bravura* song from Mozart's *Seraglio* Mdlle Jenny Ney was loudly applauded. The quaint and characteristic overture of Weber, played with great spirit, brought the concert to an end with *éclat*, and detained the majority of the audience.

It is odd, but Davison really does leave the door an inch ajar, for all his trenchance, and more than ever does one feel the pity of his not having been made a sincere friend of from the first. Let us follow him to his own particular journal and its issue of May 19, where we find another strong dose of Wagner commencing with the Preface to *Opera and Drama* "translated expressly for the *Musical World*" by Bridgeman, and as faithfully translated as could be expected of a scholar to whom the difficult task was so uncongenial. On another page the letter of a correspondent affords our editor the welcome opportunity of delivering himself as follows: "There will 'always be a generation of fools'—very true; and never, perhaps, was folly exhibited in a more preposterous light than by those theorists who pretend to trace a connection, on the one hand, between such an ignorant mountebank as Abbé Vogler and Beethoven, and on the other, between so sublime a genius as Beethoven and Richard Wagner, whose 'mission' seems to be to upset music altogether." That is slap no. 1. Slap 2 winds up an article on *Trovatore:* "Verdi should communicate with Richard Wagner—the other [!] red-republican of music, who wants to revolutionise the art after a fashion of his own. Richard would whisper something in his ear, by which Joseph (Giuseppe) might benefit. The firm of Wagner and Verdi would then be able to export their musical wares to all parts of the earth." Slap 3 is administered in the same connection as slap 2, at the end of a third leader, dealing with an anonymous champion of the Italian composer: "'Wretched Verdi,' indeed. Why, even Richard Wagner is better off, whose apostles are the man of Weimar and the Hamm Professor.* *Il Trovatore* will succeed in spite of all such juggling, and Verdi have his proper place assigned him. *Fiat Justitia!*"—Strange to see such opposites and instinctive opponents, as Wagner and the Verdi of those days, associated thus! But we have no time to linger with side-issues; the *M. Wd's* report on the fifth concert itself is our main objective here. In Davison's opinion, at variance with others, "The audience again was anything but numerous. The 'Music of the Future' is evidently not attractive to the amateurs of this

* This is evidently the source whence Parallax derived "the apostle of Weimar and Professor Praeger," which, with affecting self-martyrdom, he interpolated before the word "madmen" in his reproduction of a *later* article by Davison (*As I*, 266).

dull and 'unartistic' capital." After the programme has been duly set forth we have Davison in his breeziest humour, quite worth citing in full for that reason alone :—

The manner in which Mozart's Symphony was executed defies description. Every movement was an innovation, and a bad one. The first *allegro*, and especially the opening, was drawled through, rather than played ; the *andante* was the slowest and most somniferous performance ever heard ; the minuet was quite dreary, and would have been only tolerable had the Prophet "of the future," and the members of the orchestra worn bag-wigs, lappets, knee-breeches and buckles ; while—with a view to contrast, we suppose—the last movement went off like a rocket, and the end was attained almost before we could quite reconcile ourselves to the beginning. "O, by Abs ! O, by Adnam !" muttered the elect, to whom Richard is, as it were, a herald and a trumpet—"Lo ! here be great truths !" "O gemini," exclaimed the uninitiated, whose curse is sempiternal darkness.

Another slice from that cake of harmony to which the posterior world is destined was tasted in anticipation. This was *Tannhäuser*. In "the books" we find that Tannhäuser was a minstrel of the mid-ages, who, tempted by Venus, repaired to "the mount," and ministered egregiously to the sensual goddess, in song and verse, harping upon his harp with cunning digits. This is all set forth, in strong shadow, by the overture, which Liszt of Weimar, who carries the keys for Richard, blows the clarion in advance of him, and is in a manner as great a "clark of nigromancy" as Merlin himself—during King Arthur's time entoaded in a stone by a damsel "of the Lake," upon whom he was besotted—which Liszt of Weimar, who carries the keys, has declared "a miracle" in his "book" of the overture to *Tannhäuser*. This overture was played on Monday night—not so briskly as by Jullien and the Philharmonic Doctor (Wylde),* but briskly and impetuously—under the wand of its finder, of him into whose mind it was "blown," as says Hobbs (not Hobbes) of Malmesbury, by the Boreas (not Æolus) of harmony. The effect was stunning, windy, and preposterous. The audience was evidently perplexed, and (the "elect" excepted) postponed their verdict to "the future." The orchestra, in an under current of chorus (in unison, *ppp*—not *à la Verdi*)—which began at the 39th bar, just after the subject, a faint parody of the slow melody for the *Corno inglese*, in the *Carnaval Romain* of Hector Berlioz ; was suspended at the 71st bar, resumed at the 301st, and carried on to the climax at the end (when *Tannhäuser* has sung his last tetrastich, on "the mount")—murmured "Oh dear, dear,

* Davison has forgotten the report in his own journal of May last year (see cap. II.) ; it was Lindpaintner, by all English accounts.

dear, dear, dear, dear, dear!" eight in a bar, an expression of the emotions experienced at fiddling and piping such Amphionic strains. The overture to *Tannhäuser* was not encored.

Beethoven's symphony was well played, but hardly up to the Philharmonic mark. The "Rivulet" did not flow. Weber, the "stammerer," gave us a good notion of his stammering. The overture to his gipsy opera, *Preciosa*, by its simplicity, atoned for the Tannhäuserian mysteries, which, much more than the Eleusynian, would have puzzled Jamblichus.

Chopin's first concerto has some attractive *motivi*, but for the most part consists of an uninteresting series of *bravura* passages of greater or less difficulty. The instrumentation is as feeble and bad as Kalkbrenner's, and the form null and void. M. Hallé, however, played superbly, and was deservedly applauded . . [Singers] . . The audience were by no means satisfied with the concert.

It is difficult to be angry with Davison, in his own journal at all events, and I really do not think this kind of thing could do much harm, even to the *amour propre* of Wagner, were it but interpreted to him in the right spirit. Chorley and the *S.T.* veerer's criticisms—they seem to have fallen into line at last—were far more likely to be dangerous. We will take the *Sunday Times* (May 20) first of these two, luckily our last on this concert, skipping the remarks on Mozart's symphony (remarks we know by heart now) with its "lovely slow movement" that "became a complete dirge":—

The *Pastorale* of Beethoven, though not so absurdly mismanaged as the E flat of Mozart, was, for the Philharmonic orchestra, a very rough and unfinished performance. We have repeatedly heard it better in the olden times, before it was deemed necessary to send so far afield for instructors in the mysteries of this kind of music.

We rejoice to have heard the overture to *Tannhäuser* under the composer's direction. As we presume he will not venture to call in question the quality of the orchestra, we may fairly conclude that the performance of Monday evening was a just interpretation of his work. Satisfactory as was this hearing, as a piece of musical experience, it has in no degree altered—unless for the worse—our estimate of Herr Wagner's pretensions. The following extract from the programme sets forth the highly romantic and mythical incident this composition is intended to pourtray:— . . . In his musical illustration of this very exciting adventure, Herr Wagner, true to his principles, of course discards all the trammels of recognised form. His overture is like

no other overture in shape and pattern. It is an orchestral fantasia, in which the positions and recurrences of the materials are governed solely by the order of the incidents in his story. Now, most willingly conceding that every man has a right to reject all established rules for his musical conduct the instant he can find any better, or can shew a justifying cause for his disobedience, we believe this *Tannhäuser* story to have given as good an opportunity for fantasia making, as is likely often to occur. Our complaint is, that the composer has abandoned received forms, without giving any equivalent in exchange. He has the courage to despise the ordinary shape of an overture, but not the genius to create such beauty of material as alone can render a mere fantasia endurable.

Of subject or rhythmical melody, save at one place, to be presently noticed, the overture to Tannhäuser has not a vestige. Its whole sum and substance is a mass of orchestral colour, and even in this it has the misfortune to be little else than an assemblage of palpable imitations. The opening phrases, representing the song of the pilgrims, are a mere [!] succession of chords for clarinets, bassoons, and horns, of which the whole idea is palpably taken from [Davison?—no,] the *Carnival Romain* of Hector Berlioz, except that the French composer, eccentric as he is, never blunders on to such hideous harmonic progressions as have here fallen from the pen of his imitator. The abundant melodic baldness of this theme—we must so abuse [! !] the term, for want of a better—is subsequently exhibited when it appears in the trombones, *fortissimo*, as a species of *canto fermo* against the rest of the orchestra.

In the next section of the picture, the vision of Venus, the domain of Hector Berlioz has again been extensively pillaged. Let anyone call to mind the fairy scherzo in the *Romeo and Juliet* symphony, and, while hearing the vision scene of the *Tannhäuser* overture, he will not fail to perceive from whence come all the effects—the continuous bustle of the violins *divisi* at the highest point of their scale, the capricious spirts of tone from the acute wind instruments, the occasional clash of cymbals, and the abundant jinglings of tambourines. It is all vastly effective, without doubt, as a matter of orchestral colour, but its invention is not, in the slightest degree, attributable to Herr Wagner. Furthermore, there is a grace, piquancy, and sentiment about the original, which the imitation wholly wants.

In the next point, *Tannhäuser's* "jubilant love song," the composer condescends to the attempt at a rhythmical melody. We have elsewhere said that whenever he does this, the result is the extreme of commonplace, and the present instance makes no exception. It is the culminating point of the overture, and ought to be capable of brilliant effect; but is, in reality, as lame an attempt at broad intelligible tune as often will be heard. Shortly after this, the song

of the pilgrims re-commences, and proceeds to the end of the overture; but this time it is accompanied by a ceaseless stream of passages on the violins, intended, we presume, to depict the "murmuring in the air," which "becomes more and more joyous as it gains in strength;" but which, in truth, unhappily suggests severe mental or bodily discomfort far more forcibly than the sunlight, animation, and universal happiness intended by the composer.

The overture to *Tannhäuser* was but faintly applauded at its conclusion. A few good-natured enthusiasts, who, reading the programme, believed they heard everything set down for them to hear, appeared in raptures [wavers?]; but with musicians, as with the vast majority of the audience, it was a failure [winds up with the soloists].

Native Talent is completely alienated at last, you see. Now for the bitter-ender, *Athenæum*, May 19:—

Herr Wagner makes no way with his public as a conductor. The *Sinfonia* of Mozart went worse than we ever heard it go. The violins were rarely together; the wind instruments were hardly able to hold out in the middle movement, with such caricatured slowness was that *andante con moto* taken,—and the *finale* was degraded into a confused romp, by a speed as excessive. That Chopin's *Concerto*, a work which is as delicate as it is difficult, pleased as it did, was owing to the exquisite playing of M. Hallé, who carried it through,—supporting, not receiving support from, the orchestra . . [rude remarks, quoted p.182n] . .

Due pains had been bestowed by Herr Wagner on his own overture,—but the pains had been bestowed in vain, for never did new work making such a noise, and concerning which so much noise has been made, fall more dead on the ears of a callous and contemptuous [?!] public.

Though we have already spoken of this long-winded prelude in general terms, we must be permitted [to immortalise ourselves by] a few more minute remarks on a composition for which such high honours have been claimed. Our impression is, that the overture to 'Tannhäuser' is one of the most curious pieces of patchwork ever passed off by self-delusion for a complete and significant creation. The first sixteen bars of the *andante maestoso* announce the solitary strain of real melody [Smart deemed it "a mere succession of chords"] existing in the whole opera. This is the Pilgrims' chant, and is the half of a good tune in *triple tempo*, which, however, seems to us no more ecclesiastic in style than the *notturno* in Mendelssohn's 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' The second part of the air is made up of those yawning chromatic progressions which seem Herr Wagner's only bridge from point to point. After it has been given once, comes the whole

over again, simply repeated with embroideries. In the *allegro* a rude imitation of Mendelssohn's faëry music [why not Weber's?] may be detected, both at the opening of the movement and in the phrases from bars 8 to 12. To these succeeds a scramble, not leading into, so much as broken off by, the second subject. This is a hackneyed eight-bar phrase, the commonplace of which is not disguised by an accidental sharp and the omission of an interval. As the *allegro* proceeds, one or other of the above "notions" is repeated with small attempt at working-out :—and the ear is thoroughly weary ere the point is reached where a busy figure for the violins, identical with one used in Cherubini's overture to 'Lodoiska,' dresses up the theme of the Pilgrim *andante*, which for the third time is presented in its integrity, with slight modifications of rhythm, none of harmony, and no *coda* by way of final climax or close.

When it is stripped and sifted, Herr Wagner's creation may be likened, not to any real figure with its bone and muscle, but to a compound of one shapely feature with several tasteless fragments, smeared over with cement, but so flimsily that the paucity of good material is proved by the most superficial examination. Of Herr Wagner's instrumentation as ill balanced, ineffective, thin, and noisy, we have elsewhere recorded our judgment [and doom]. Yet, this overture is almost the sole coherent instrumental work from his hand which he could produce in substantiation of his claim to be considered the composer of the future. In London, we repeat, he fails to make any [?] converts ; either as a conductor or composer.

For thoroughly bad manners, Chorley would take some beating anywhere, even in Herr Tappert's Dictionary of German Impoliteness to Wagner. What was there in this *Tannhäuser* overture, to make it intelligible and admirable to wellnigh any but the British mind? Certainly it had failed in Paris and Munich between three and five years back, under unsympathetic direction; but its very first performance at simple Zurich, early '52, had been greeted with enthusiasm ; whilst far Petersburg gives it at a Philharmonic concert "with great applause" just one year hence (*N.Z.* July 1, '56), and in Paris itself "the Tannhäuser-overture always earned me many a call" at Wagner's own three concerts of 1860. There must have been something peculiarly irresponsive to fresh impressions, in the English temperament of those days; the days that set the fashion for our Wagner-hatred of the next twenty years, if not their double. Perhaps it may be sought in the prudery of an audience that would have thought it most improper to wave lace-bordered mouchoirs in approval of

such a subject as this overture's, for all that *As I* said it did; perhaps also in what Dreisterner signalises with more justice as the "cast-iron conservatism" of our insular bent; but most of all in what Wagner himself denotes in private as "this ridiculous Mendelssohn cult," then carried to a pitch past present comprehension, and "visited on unbelieving me" in consequence of Parallax's blabbings.

VI.

"AN END IN" LONDON.

Birthday honours. New York offer declined.—Sixth concert; Potter's symphony and "the Scotch."—Reading Dante; objections to 'Paradise'; Mitleid *and Will-denial. Whitebait-dinner.—Seventh concert; Queen Victoria's kindness;* Tannh.-*ov. repeated.—Berliozians* v. *Wagnerians. Two fellow-sufferers; cordiality for once at least; a dinner* à quatre.—*Eighth concert; farewell to band and audience.—Berlioz and a parting glass; a bit of* Op. and Drama *strikes him; he sends a friendly letter.—Re-crossing the Channel.*

> *Were I musician* alone, *then all were in order; but I have the misfortune to be something besides, and that's the reason of my being so difficult to dispose of in this world.* (To Otto, May 22, 1855).

Tendered an invitation to another festivity by the author of *As I knew him*, let us rise betimes and put on our best clothes for it: "On the morning of the 22nd May, Wagner came to Milton Street very early. It was his birthday; he was forty-two, and the good, devoted Minna had so carefully timed the arrival of her congratulatory letter, that Wagner had received it that morning. He was informed that her gift was a dressing-gown of violet velvet, lined with satin of similar colour, headgear—the *biretta*, so well known—to match,—articles of apparel which furnished his enemies with so much opportunity for charges of ostentation, egregious vanity, etc. Minna knew her husband well; the gift was entirely after his heart. He read us the letter. The only portion of it which I can remember referred to the animal world,—the dog, Peps, who had been presented with a new collar [on their return from Paris, autumn '53]; and of his parrot, who had repeated unceasingly, 'Richard Wagner, du bist ein grosser mann' (Richard Wagner, you are a great man) [a variant, not P.'s, says "Böser Richard, arme Minna!"]. Wagner's imitation of the parrot was very amusing. That day the banquet was spread for Richard

Wagner. How he did talk! It was the never-ending fountain leaping from the rock, sparkling and bright, clear and refreshing. He told us episodes of his early career at Magdeburg [recalling no filial memories to P. !] and Riga. How he impressed me then with his energy! . . . Certainly it was but a birthday-feast ["champagne went round, as ever with him on a feast-day," *Wie*], and the talk was genial and merry; yet there went out from me, unbidden and unchecked, 'Truly, that is a great man.' Yes, though it was but after-dinner conversation, the reflections were those of a man born to occupy a high position in the world of thought and to compel the submission of others to his intellectual vigour."

No doubt our Ferdinand did develop fondness for his fetish, in his own peculiar fashion, perhaps the more affecting for its gaucherie; but one cannot pry into the simplest of his anecdotes without finding him contradict himself in some particular or other. Here in *As* we have Minna describing a gift awaiting her husband—if words mean anything; but *Wie* tells us, "The good Minna had sent him her congratulations and the present made for him by her own hands, and the composer of 'Tannhäuser' was as joyful as a child about it. A new violet silk dressing-gown, a new velvet biretta, were in the parcel," etc. Yet if Praeger had but looked a dozen pages ahead in his own book, he would have found Wagner writing in his first letter to him from Zurich thereafter—an authentic letter, too: "My wife has made me a splendid house-jacket and wonderful summer-trousers of silk; I skip from one sofa to another in them—and long to get to work." That parcel, accordingly, had not been sent to London; it is even doubtful if Minna's birthday-greeting had, as Richard makes no mention of it in his long letter to Otto of this selfsame day, which cannot therefore have commenced at Milton Street so "very early" (says *Wie*, "am frühen Morgen schon").

"I write you these lines"—Wagner to Otto—"directly after receipt of your letter, lest any London atmosphere should blow twixt its effect on me and my reply. Believe me, my longing for home is great; I've neither peace nor pleasure . . . Yet rest assured, I do not blame you for advising me to make the London expedition; I can imagine no one who would not have advised it. Only, *I* should have known myself better, and *I* alone committed an inconsequence which it is perfectly just I should pay

for. Were I musician *alone*, then all were in order; but I have the misfortune to be something besides, and *that's* the reason of my being so difficult to dispose of in this world that it is impossible to obviate a thousand errors." That hardly resembles a case of rushing off to Milton Street with the milkman, to spend the livelong day there—an embarrassing course for any guest to take in a tiny household; but we will not mar this letter by mixing so extraneous an element with it.—"With the most excellent intention, dearest friend, you have placed yourself between the world and me, assuredly to dull the shock; take care you do not also feel a little of it!"—a warning to the magnanimous friend, who possibly already knew its true significance far better than the warner did.

The London birthday-letter has a kind word for some Londoners, however: "Just as I have latterly aimed more and more at having to do with none save a few choicer spirits . . . so I have been able to console myself here with having won the high esteem of many individuals. What really disgusts and deeply wounds me is chiefly inherent in the character of my function itself, in that I am obliged to play a rôle as concert-conductor and accommodate myself to the most inartistic views and habits, without so much as the satisfaction of getting my objections understood. But my folly has been incurred, and for my wife's sake—who would have been terribly upset by the contrary—I have determined to hold out, however irksome it may prove to me."

Minna actually is mentioned here, then, but without a word of any birthday gift or letter from her. From whom a pretty gift did come, we shall see in an instant. "You understand everything, and feel with me; O believe how I count that a gain! The edge of every sorrow is soon blunted when we find fellow-feeling for it; ay, that is probably the only source of all sincerest and most prospering love"—he tells the man whose chivalry he cannot possibly have fathomed yet—"So let us simply think about a cheerful Wiedersehen! I perceive with hearty joy that your dear wife is well again; give her my very best thanks for the bass theme, upon which I'm to write her a fugue, am I not? Another purse from your dear wife!" etc.—That was the present, and if there were not a pair of eyes at Milton Street that guessed the cause of Wagner's happiness that day, I'm much mistaken.

Quite another point of interest is presented by this letter (the last to either of the Wesendoncks from London): "I have just received a tentative enquiry from New York, whether I should be disposed to go there on the express invitation of several societies—perhaps in two months' time—and personally pursue the propaganda of my compositions already commenced with great success by others there. So the second edition of London, you see, is preparing itself. At anyrate I shouldn't need to unpack at all in Zurich, to be able to go straight on to America. —Or shall I wait till you're installed on your country domain?" (the first we hear of the future 'Green Hill').

After reading the earlier part of the letter, we may be pretty sure the American feeler (by no means the first—cf. iv, 211) was not entertained very seriously. Was it seriously meant, and who made it? That is answered by the correspondence with Liszt of four months later, when Liszt forwards a letter from Theodor Hagen, "a friend of Klindworth's and partisan of yours, established in New York about a year," conveying an offer, apparently from Mason Brothers, "to conduct concerts in America next winter." Unfortunately T. Hagen's letter is nowhere published, but in this connection Liszt mentions his old pupil W. Mason—to whom he had written last December about his brother's editorship of the New York *Musical Gazette*—so that this particular offer *may* have been an indirect result of Dreisterner's transatlantic 'championing,' though P. sets up no claim to it either in his book or that letter to the *N. Z.* of Jan. '56, which says: "Another orchestral society [New Philh.] made Wagner a proposal through me [?] for next season; but he declined it, as also the offers from New York and Boston," and it is unlike P. to minimise his own importance. True, Wagner sends a line to him about it Sept. 14, 55, but he first answers Liszt, the day before: "What am I to say to you on this New York offer? In London I heard [through K.?] that they were thinking of an invitation to me. Lucky for me that these people don't make a big bid, as in my great pecuniary embarrassment the prospect of earning a large amount in a short time, say 10,000 dollars, naturally would induce me to undertake an American expedition of the sort; albeit it would perhaps be a great act of folly, in the long run, to squander the best of my remaining vital force on such a sordid errand," and he begs Liszt to decline it with thanks for him.

Similarly to Praeger next day (Sept. 14): "A genuine invitation from New York has reached me after all, to go there this winter for 6 months, to conduct and draw good pay. Luckily they cannot possibly offer me good money there, or I should have felt bound to take the thing into consideration. Of course I shall—*not* accept the invitation; I had enough with London." So, when Liszt asks him ten days later to let him name 10,000 to 12,000 dollars for a six-month tour, Wagner replies that it would place him in "a hideous dilemma" and begs his friend to have no hand in such an "awful nightmare," adding: "Ten years ago I might have undertaken such a thing; but to have to beat the bush like that now, just to be able to live, would be too hard—now that I'm fit for nothing but to do and dedicate myself to my own strict business. It would mean my never finishing the Nibelungen in my lifetime. Good God! such sums as I might (??) '*earn*' in America, people ought to *present to* me without asking aught in return save what I just am doing, the best thing that I can do." The North American offer is put to bed for another three years.

The sixth concert draws near, and we possess a tiny trait from its rehearsal, a reminiscence set down fourteen years thereafter. "The fatal maxim" of hurrying all slow movements—says Wagner in his essay on *Conducting*—"was put into so many words at last, when a most amiable elderly contrapuntist whose symphony I was to conduct, Mr Potter (if I mistake not), implored me to take his Andante downright fast, since he had great fears of its tiring people. I pointed out that, however brief the time which his Andante occupied, it could not fail to tire if scrambled through without expression; whereas it might easily fascinate if its dainty naive theme were rendered by the orchestra somewhat as I proceeded to hum it him, for that surely was how he had also meant it. Mr Potter was visibly touched, gave in to me, and simply pleaded that he had lost all wont of taking such a style of orchestral delivery into his reckoning. On the night itself he pressed my hand most joyfully just after that Andante" (*P.* IV. 307).

This Mr Potter with three Christian names, best-known whereof is Cipriani, was at that time Principal of the Royal Academy of Music; when he was studying at Vienna in 1818, Beethoven

himself had written of him, "Potter has visited me several times; he seems to be a good man, and has talent for composition"; we also hear that "he beat time with his hand, and not with a baton" (*Grove*). Says *As*, albeit Dreisterner did flagellate the Royal Academy in '55: "Potter was a charming man in daily intercourse, of short stature, thin, ample features, huge shaggy eyebrows, stand-up collars behind whose points the old man [only 63 then] could hide half his face, and a coat copied from a Viennese pattern of last century. Wagner was genuinely drawn to the man; and as the inimical 'Musical World' said, 'took great pains with the symphony' (p. 347)"—the page-reference being of more constructive value than *As* imagined, since it proves possession of the dreaded volume for that year at least. My honoured friend Herr Glasenapp is disposed to treat this portrait as a caricature, and in some respects it may be; but if one may argue back from son to sire, I personally should think the "eyebrows" part of it—of course the "charming man in daily intercourse"—for once a faithful recollection, though the "short stature" seems improbable, and I defy any one to realise a mental image of "thin, ample features."

Pardon the digression; the programme waits. Sixth concert, May 28:—

Part I.

Sinfonia in G minor (MS. composed for the Philharmonic Society [1834]) . . .	Potter.
Aria, "Questi avventurieri" (Seraglio), Herr Formes	Mozart.
Concerto, violin, M. Sainton	Beethoven.
Siciliana, Mdlle Bockholtz Falconi . . .	Pergolesi.
Overture, "Leonora"	Beethoven.

Part II.

Sinfonia in A minor, No. 3	Mendelssohn.
Recit. "Crudele!" / Aria "Non mi dir!" — "Don Giovanni"; Mdlle Bockholtz Falconi .	Mozart.
Recit. "I rage!" / Air "O ruddier than the cherry" — "Acis and Galatea"; Herr Formes *	Handel.
Overture, "Berg-geist"	Spohr.

* The *M. World* of August 11, 55, has a paragraph about Wagner and Formes, for which one hopes the latter was not personally responsible: "The

If the shade of "veering" shewn in Hogarth's review of the fifth concert may be attributed to Dreisterner's "bold assertion" of two days previously, the latter writer gave additional, tho' milder cause for coolness by two further transatlantic gaucheries which the *M. World* reproduced in its issue of two days prior to this sixth. Gaucherie no. 1: "Now the musicians of the Old Philharmonic orchestra, although not at first liking the exertion of following their new conductor's *bâton*, because he beats after the German method, and that being a foreign way, and he himself being a foreigner [etc.] . . but there is no resisting Wagner's unaffected enthusiasm and seriousness . . *and the band now begins to see that, until Wagner came, they did not know what a conductor was, in an artistic sense, at all events.*" The italics are Davison's, of course, and he comments on the long-winded sentence (I have reduced it by one half) as follows: "The 'old band' could play very well, for all that, under Mendelssohn and Spohr; and they were foreigners, and Germans to boot. The former, it is true, descended in a straight line from a certain Jewish philosopher; and Jews are not admitted to the ecstatic bliss of the 'future' perfect 'whole,' of which *Lohengrin* is just a slice in anticipation. Poor Mr Costa! he, too, is a foreigner." Gaucherie no. 2 we have had already (p. 151), with its impertinence about "the directors fearing that editor's rage"; so that the very man who had been employed as Wagner's *agent* at an early stage of his negotiations with the directors, is shewn up as perpetually flouting them. Not an auspicious mode of avoiding "friction," and it is scarcely surprising if the Philharmonic secretary does seem a little huffed in the *Daily News* of May 29:—

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following anecdote is vouched for as authentic. At the rehearsal of one of the recent Philharmonic concerts conducted by Herr Kapellmeister Wagner, Herr Formes was present. 'Guten Morgen, Herr Formes,' said Wagner; to which Herr Formes at once replied, 'Guten Morgen, Herr Kapellmeister.' 'Finden sie sich glücklich in England?'— demanded the Man of the Future. 'Ich lebe hier nun sechs Jahre in England, und habe mich einer grossen Anerkennung zu erfreuen,' was the German basso's answer. 'Ich werde froh sein wenn ich England im Rücken habe,' retorted the Hope of Weimar. 'Apropos, Herr Formes—warum besuchen Sie mich nicht?'— he added—to which retorted Herr Formes—'Ich wohne 30, Gower-street, Bedford-square.' To which the author of the *Kunstwerk der Zukunft* had nothing to say. The above anecdote was eagerly laid hold of by Dr Saphir, and all Vienna reads it in the *Humorist*."

Mr Potter's symphony in G minor, which was written expressly for the Philharmonic Society (of which Mr Potter has for many years been a most distinguished member) is a composition of a very high order of excellence, and is well worthy of a place among the great works of the pure classical school. Every part of it bespeaks the man of genius and the accomplished artist. . . . The slow movement, *andante con moto*, is remarkable for the beautifully vocal character of its melody, and the elegant distribution of the melody among the different instruments. The applause bestowed upon this movement was so warm that it might have been interpreted into an encore, but this was not done. . . . This symphony was admirably performed in every respect; and, after a reception so very favourable, we trust it will not be allowed to remain upon the shelf.

Sainton's performance of Beethoven's Concerto was a magnificent display of all the great qualities of a violinist—a combination of strength, fire, grace, and refinement, which could not be surpassed by any performer of the day. Sainton, ever since his arrival in this country [1845], has been in a state of constant progress, and we doubt whether any of his continental rivals are entitled to be called his superiors.

Mendelssohn's Symphony in A minor, the "Scottish Symphony," was played with powerful effect, though the times of some portions of it were not altogether the same as those given by Mendelssohn himself. Probably M. Wagner never heard him conduct the symphony.* An author's own reading, of course, must be the best; though we confess that M. Wagner's ideas, when they were different, did not always displease us. The immense impetuosity which he threw into the *allegro guerriero* gave additional grandeur and majesty to the resumption of the first subject which forms the finale. In the overture to *Leonora*, likewise, the time was occasionally pressed and relaxed in a manner to which we have not been accustomed; but our impression was that these licenses, as they are deemed, heightened the fire and vigour of this incomparable overture.—The vocal music was very good. . . .

In the *Illustrated* Hogarth gives the briefest summary, without mentioning Wagner at all. Glover of the *Morning Post* (May 29) elects to play the village-schoolmaster and teach the conductor his place:—

[*Programme.*] We know not whether Mr. Potter's symphony be a recent production, for, unhappily, its being still in MS. proves nothing

* Almost certainly Wagner never did, but he had chosen it *in memoriam* of Mendelssohn at one of his three 'subscription-concerts' in Dresden 1848 (vol. ii, 216).

to the purpose; but that it is an extremely clever and musicianly work, fully worthy the long-established reputation of Mr Potter, one of our best native professors, there can be no doubt whatever. It is constructed on the plan followed more or less by all the great symphonists from Haydn (who was its inventor) downwards, and deserves to hold an honourable position amongst other conscientious and skilful compositions of the classical school to which it belongs. Mr Potter's work was, on the whole, very ably performed, under the direction of Herr Wagner, and frequently elicited applause of the warmest kind.

Beethoven's *concerto* afforded M. Sainton a great opportunity for displaying his appreciation of the highest beauties of music, no less than his mastery over the technical difficulties of violin-playing; and whether considered with reference to mechanism or sentiment, his performance of this noble work merits almost unqualified praise. . . . M. Sainton was enthusiastically applauded, as he well deserved to be, after each movement of the *concerto*, and finally quitted the orchestra amidst hearty cheering, in which the band took part.

The performances of Beethoven's "Leonora," and Mendelssohn's symphony, were each unequal in merit, and indeed thus much may be said of almost every piece played under the direction of Herr Wagner. Many good and poetical readings there certainly were, but also others which we can only characterise as mistakes, perpetrated either by the conductor's head or hand, or both together. Herr Wagner is deficient in steadiness—an indispensable quality to an orchestral director—and is so whimsical, and sudden in his conceptions of effect, that it is impossible for a large body of performers to understand him, or carry out his views on all occasions. These views, too, are frequently erroneous as impulsive, taken from a wrong point and in a wrong light [who told you so?]—based upon his ideas of what *might* be done with particular passages, rather than upon a knowledge of what *should* be done [the exclusive property of Critics.] He is capricious and erratic and wanders in the realms of fancy, when he should be humbly endeavouring to express the meaning and purposes of much greater men than himself [To the bottom of the class, Master Richard!]. If Herr Wagner would seriously study the mighty works which he undertakes to direct, with the really poetical mind which we believe him to possess, we doubt not that he would accomplish much more than he has yet done, for the "*beaux moments*" that he now has, fitful though they be, and like lightning flashes which serve to make the surrounding darkness visible, still reveal the existence of powers of no common order. At present he is a contradiction [and must be birched]. The vocal music was admirably sung by Herr Formes and Madlle Bohkoltz Falconi, and the concert concluded worthily with Spohr's overture to "Der Berg-geist."

The *Times*, on the contrary, almost beams May 29, always excepting where its idol Mendelssohn is handled otherwise than according to its ritual :—

The directors appear to have been seized with a sudden fit of patriotism. The appearance of an English symphony, or in other words a symphony written by an English composer, used to be a rare event at the Philharmonic ; but now, in the course of three concerts, we have had no less than two ; and to these, if report speaks truly, are to be added overtures, at the 7th and 8th concerts, also by English musicians. What was said of the symphony of Mr Lucas may, in great measure, be applied to that of Mr Potter, which was composed nearly as long ago as the other, expressly for the Philharmonic Society. It is the work of an admirable musician, one who has studied the greatest models *con amore*. . . . Herr Wagner directed the performance with evident goodwill ; and, though the last movement was somewhat of a scramble, and the *scherzo* (the weakest part) a little obscure, all the rest went well. There was very great applause at the end, which was not only fair, considering the merits of the symphony, but due to its author on account of the important influence he has exercised for many years on the progress of English music, and on the education of English musicians, as principal professor of composition in the Royal Academy of Music.

The overture to *Leonora*, although the opening slow movement was a little mysterious, went with more decision than anything we have hitherto heard played under Herr Wagner's baton. True, the band are so familiar with it, that they could almost perform it without the music (as Herr Wagner conducts it without the score) ; but, whatever the reason, we mention the fact with pleasure. Mendelssohn's symphony was by no means so happy. The times were all wrong, except in the slow movement ; the first *allegro* was tormented in such a manner that it was only by great good luck that the players were not more than once brought to a standstill ; and the *scherzo* was no more like a Mendelssohn *scherzo* than it was like the overture to *Tannhäuser*, to which it may be regarded as the very antipodes. The whole performance, in short, was extremely coarse, fidgetty, loose, and unsatisfactory. It was listened to with an apathy to which the many previous performances of the same work by the band of the Philharmonic Society have made us quite unaccustomed. Herr Wagner may be right, and former conductors wrong ; but it is odd enough that a symphony which has never before failed to excite the enthusiasm of every one present should last night, under the superintendence of the newly-imported *chef d'orchestre*, have created no emotion whatever. Spohr's overture—one of his grandest and best—was well executed.

M. Sainton is always studying, and therefore always improving. His execution of Beethoven's concerto for the violin—one of the most harassing and difficult works ever written for the instrument—was throughout masterly and spirited; in short, the character of the music was as well understood by the player as the passages were executed with correctness and precision. This was the genuine success of the concert, and would have been all the more acceptable had the orchestral accompaniments gone better. M. Sainton must have been sadly perplexed in more places than one . . [Dn objects to cadenzas] . . The vocal music was excellent. . . .

The above should dispel for ever the foolish myth of Davison's having been "paid by Meyerbeer," or by anybody else, to keep the newcomer down; according to his lights, and his taste and ear, he certainly is endeavouring to deal out even-handed justice. The same remark applies to his very brief notice in the *M. World* of June 2 (an issue distinguished by no other anti-Wagner sallies than a column reproduced from Chorley's critique on the 5th concert, and six columns of the translated *Opera and Drama*) :—

Mr. Potter's fine symphony . . . was well played. Herr Wagner took great pains with it. The symphony of Mendelssohn was worried by the new conductor in a pitiless manner. The whole performance of this grand work was unworthy of the society.

M. Sainton triumphed over all the difficulties of Beethoven's violin concerto in masterly style . . . We never heard this accomplished violinist play more admirably. He was applauded enthusiastically. Nothing, however, could have been more imperfect than the orchestral accompaniments.

The two overtures were both very satisfactory, and the vocal music was good. . . .

Davison's opinion is echoed, tho' without his innate geniality, by H. Smart in the *Sunday Times* of June 3 :—

The remainder of the concert [after Potter's symphony] presented fewer occasions for critical remark than ordinary. In the overtures—*Leonora* and the *Berggeist*—the conductor was unusually sensible, and like the rest of the world in his readings. They were both extremely well performed—better perhaps, on the whole, than any other orchestral pieces during the present season. Poor Mendelssohn's A minor Symphony, however, was made to act as the safety-valve, so to speak, by which the otherwise pent-up whims of Herr Wagner found vent. The "Introduzione" was dragged and drawled out of all the passion which it has so marvellously the power of asserting;

and the succeeding *allegro* was opened just so much too slowly that the necessary acceleration at the first *forte* had an absurdly exaggerated effect. Furthermore, we never heard a more unfortunate display, than in this movement, of the conductor's propensity to slacken the speed in *cantabile* passages. Instead of giving the effect of a refined style—which, doubtless, he intends—it simply suggested the idea of the orchestra being sadly puzzled with the rhythm of the movement and quite unable to play it in time. The marvellous *scherzo* was taken much too slowly. All its bright impetuous, restless spirit was gone. It was perfectly unbearable to hear such music, with the finest orchestra in the world, so utterly dis-characterised. The two closing movements, though more fairly treated, were anything but satisfactory ; and it remains then to mention that the *adagio* was the only portion of the work to which justice was rendered. On the whole we do not remember ever to have heard this great symphony performed in so indifferent and uncomfortable a fashion. The impression seemed universal. Every portion of it fell tamely and coldly, to an extent scarcely credible to those who remember its former triumphs. Even the *scherzo*, which seldom escapes an *encore*, passed off with the barest possible notice. Scarcely a dozen hands resounded to that which usually evokes a perfect fury of applause [Fie, Sir, a Philharmonic audience could never forget itself so far as that !]

Now that we have heard the whole posse of critics on this concert—Hogarth himself chiming in with the rest—we are morally constrained to give them reason for once, and admit that Wagner was not a first-class Mendelssohn conductor. It is difficult to see how he *could* have been, since Mendelssohn inspired him with no passion, either of love or hate, but left him cold. Undoubtedly he did his best with the Scotch Symphony, or we should not hear all these complaints of wrong tempi etc. ; it would have been so much easier to let the band just play as it was used to, as he is accused of having done with the 'Italian.' But, completely out of touch with Mendelssohnianism, it was inevitable that the more pains he took to bring *it* into sympathy with his own leanings, the more must he ruffle those who, in this one instance, had a better knowledge of the composer's wish than he. There, again, a little cordial intercourse with London pundits might have been of sterling profit to him ; and advice from the competent, if tendered in the proper spirit, would surely not have been despised.

But what was Mr Chorley doing, that we obtain no criticism from *him ?*—O yes : he missed this sixth concert, for it coincided

with the second day of the festival at Düsseldorf under direction of Ferdinand Hiller ("notre good friend Rosencranz-Hiller," Berlioz to Liszt, June 7), a gentleman the sprinklings of whose eau-de-Cologne redole from C's "Foreign correspondence" in the *Athenæum* of June 9:—

Never did Germany stand more in need of a composer than at present. For Herr Wagner's operas do *not* please [you shouldn't take the word of Ferdinand von Cöln, or of his friend Professor Bischoff either], in spite of the picturesque and sympathetic nature of their *libretti*,—and in spite of all the machinery of wit [Bülow's], sarcasm [Pohl's?], misplaced enthusiasm [Liszt's], and political sympathy [the devil knows whose], brought to bear on recommending them. 'Tannhäuser' is the most liked among them, but this principally in the holes and corners [Leipzig, Frankfort, Prague, Carlsruhe, Hanover etc.!], and not the high-places of German opera, Dresden excepted. Curious it was, after reading the composer's letter to the Cologne manager, translated in the *Athenæum* a few weeks since,* to hear at Cologne on every side [from the Hiller-Bischoff party] that Lohengrin had there proved an entire and profitless failure [not so—see 90-*sup.*; the company took it touring, anyhow]. I cannot but

* As I can find no German reproduction of this letter, I give it in the exact setting in which, under the heading "Music and the Drama," it had appeared in the *Athenæum* of Feb. 10, '55:—"The *Cologne Gazette* contains a letter of Herr Richard Wagner to Herr Röder, manager of the Cologne *Stadttheater*, on the performance of Herr Wagner's opera, 'Lohengrin,' at Cologne. We think the epistle rather characteristic [sneer 1] of the expected leader of the Philharmonic Concerts.—'If you really have succeeded,' says Herr Wagner, 'in making this most difficult work generally understood (which only a very happy execution could have accomplished), I must be very grateful indeed for the zeal and the labour which you [have] bestowed upon such an execution. I must beg especially that you will give my thanks to your *Capellmeister* for the immense pains ('*für die schreckliche Mühe*') which he must have given to the work before it could have been crowned with a real success,—a success, after all, which could only be made possible by the assistance of able and devoted singers, to whom I, therefore, also should wish to be remembered most kindly. It is true, I always expect more from theatres of the rank of yours, knowing that *there* are the rising talents and the young and aspiring conductors,—whereas at the larger theatres every one is finished, *blasé*, *célèbre*, and therefore not disposed to learn new things. Nevertheless, I am always surprised, again, when I hear of a success of that very difficult Lohengrin; and doubly, in such a case, I deem it my duty not coldly to withhold my most joyful acknowledgments.'—Meanwhile, private letters from Cologne speak of 'Lohengrin' as anything but new [sneer 2]; and as an opera forced on the town by newspaper influence [!!], which has not succeeded with the musical [?], as distinguished from the revolutionary public" (sneer 3—"revolutionary public" is a trifle out of date, Mr C.).

give currency to this [misleading] report, in confirmation of my idea that the new doctrine, howsoever it may disturb young writers, blighting and burning up all their geniality by encouraging in them a humour at once *blasé* and arrogant,—does not and cannot command a public,—and that, though it may represent the irritations and discontents of a part of the rising generation of pseudo-artists, it has neither gone to the heart nor touched the sympathies of the great music-loving people of Germany, north and south.—C."

"C." doubtless believed he was telling the truth, but he had lent too greedy an ear to Wagner's envious detractors in the Fatherland, who must have been as well aware as the rest of musical Germany that the Berlin Intendant, after striving for three years past to bring the composer to terms over a production of *Tannhäuser* at the court-theatre there, at last had succeeded; whilst the same opera was already in rehearsal at Munich, leaving Vienna *alone* of the first-rank stages to account for. It should have been C.'s duty to verify such gross misstatements as the above—which he could have easily done by applying to Liszt—ere "giving currency to this report in confirmation of my idea." Dispassionate as is the language, in appearance, that was the most insidious assault, and the farthest-reaching in its possibilities of mischief, yet made on Wagner in this country.

Take a clean napkin, or a piece of bread; wipe your mouth with it; and taste of the subject on which the object of this Rhine-conspiracy is simultaneously regaling. At the end of April he had told Mathilde Wesendonck, "I'm reading a canto of Dante every morning ere I set to work; I'm still stuck deep in Hell; its horrors accompany my second act of Walküre," and Liszt a fortnight later: "I am accompanied through this hell here by a perusal of Dante, at which I had never arrived before. I have got through his Inferno, and just reached the gates of Purgatory. Indeed I need that Purgatory; for, rightly pondered, it was a truly sinful levity that led my steps to London, and torrid is the penance I must do." Liszt's answer (June 2) is of peculiar interest, as it foreshadows what some people deem his greatest work: "So you are reading Dante; good company indeed for you. For my own part, I mean to furnish you a kind of commentary on that perusal: I have long been carrying a Dante-symphony about in my head—it shall all be on paper in course of this year—3 movements, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise

—the first two purely instrumental, the last with chorus. I expect to be able to bring it with me if I visit you this autumn, and if you do not dislike it you must let me inscribe your name. . . . As soon as I have done revising my Prometheus choruses I shall set to at my Dante-symphony, which already is sketched in part." Liszt's Dante-symphony will not really be completed till the summer of next year, nor published until Easter '59, when we shall hear something more of that inscription. For the nonce we are more concerned with the train of thoughts it conjures up in Wagner's mind, commencing with those æsthetic.

June 7, while the printers are busy with "C.'s" stab in the back, its victim unburdens his mind to Liszt in one of the longest and, save for its fellow to August Roeckel, the profoundest of his letters from London: "Best of mortals, let me express my amazement, first of all, at your *enormous productivity!* So it's a Dante-symphony this time, you've got in your head? And you hope to lay it whole before me in the autumn? Forgive my amaze at this marvel, but when I look back on your activity these latter years, you seem quite superhuman! . . . A 'Divina Comedia,' then? By all means a splendid idea, and already I enjoy your music in advance; yet I must have a little chat with you about it. I haven't a moment's doubt your 'Hell' and 'Purgatory' will turn out well; but I have some qualms about the 'Paradise,' and you confirm them yourself when you tell me you've taken choruses into your plan for it. In the Ninth symphony (as work of art) the last movement, with the choruses, is decidedly the weakest part; it is of merely art-historical significance, since it very naively lays bare to us the embarrassment of a genuine tone-poet who doesn't know quite how to wind up with a Paradise (after Hell and Purgatory). To tell the truth, dearest Franz, there's something seriously amiss about this 'Paradise'; and if any one were needed to confirm it, conspicuously enough it's done by *Dante*, the chartered bard of Paradise—decidedly the weakest part, again, in his Divine Comedy. I have followed Dante with profoundest sympathy through Hell and Purgatory; ascending from the pit of Hell in company of the poet, with reverence did I wash me in the brine at foot of Purgatory's mount; I quaffed the pure air of that dawn divine, climbed stage by stage, killed off each passion one by one, fought down the rampant vital instinct, until at last, the furnace reached, I shed the last desire of life and flung myself

into the fire; there—drowning in the sight of Beatrice—to purge away the last of will and personality."

He goes on to narrate his rude awakening "from this final liberation" by the arid dogmatisms of the *Paradise*—"To be just to Dante, I had to place myself once more on the *historic* standpoint (as with Beethoven)," and further, to admire "the high poetic fantasy with which those sophistries themselves" are dressed, "exactly as I had admired the musical art of Beethoven in that last movement of his symphony." But what had roused an echo in his "deepest heart" was Dante's "homage to those holy men who had chosen poverty of their free will," and "finally the inspiration which bade him choose his youthful love, his Beatrice, as visible embodiment of the Divine belief; and precisely in so far as that belief may mean emancipation from one's personal egoism by means of Love, do I endorse this Beatrice idea with rapture." There we have the autobiographic note again, as in the letter of three weeks earlier (p. 253), and can heartily sympathise with the writer's wish that Dante had but left him in that furnace where he was on the point of "losing the last fibre of personal consciousness, of *consciousness itself*," instead of making Beatrice mount the "Church coach and bear him into company of the Catholic Deity,—even tho' Dante represents Him with the selfsame art as you undoubtedly will seek to laud Him in your choruses."

From that departure-point we very naturally approach "the floating problem" of all modern thought, "How to project into this terrible world a God who shall turn the monstrous sorrows of existence to a semblance, the yearned redemption to a tangible reality. It may be all very well for the philistine—especially the English sort—who strikes a clinking bargain with his God, whereby, through the fulfilment of so-and-so many points in the bond, he is to be recouped for sundry failures in this present world by everlasting pleasance in the next. But what have *we* to do with such plebeian notions?"

From Liszt's silence hereanent we may reasonably infer, it all is little to his liking, or a throw above his head. No matter: Wagner gradually leads up to Wille-zum-Leben and its denial—without naming Schopenhauer, 'tis true, but entirely in his terms and method—a subject we have agreed to defer till next volume. From "the artist" we are then conducted to "the saint" through

the question, "*What* do we behold in that abnormal state, and whether our *sympathy* can be a *communion of joy*, or one *of suffering?* The answer is supplied by all the veritable *geniuses* and all true *saints* of all the ages; who tell us they see naught but *suffering*, have felt naught else than *pity*." Once again we are wholly in the atmosphere of the future Venice Diary, and touch at last the Buddhist tenet, that "the world's creation was a sin of Brahma's; who *changed himself into this world*, has to pay for it in just its monstrous sufferings, and redeems himself in person of those saints alone who through complete denial of the Will-to-life attain 'Nirvana,' *i.e.* the land of Being-no-more."

A mere rough outline of this priceless letter, wherein one does not know at which to wonder most, the profundity of thought and clearness of its exposition, or the skill with which Liszt's superficial interest is claimed by the recurrence every here and there of some allusion to his promised symphony. With such a one it closes—dramatic artist that its writer is: "In his exegesis of the Godhead's properties Dante often seems a childish Jesuit, to me at least. But perhaps it will succeed better with you, my precious friend; and as you are undertaking to paint this picture in *tones*, I'm half inclined to prophesy success for you, since Music is the true artistic archetype of the very world itself—to the initiated there can be no mistake about it. Only, I entertain a friendly fear anent the Paradise, and more especially the choruses."

Whether the last clause refers to Liszt's capacity (after his friend's experience of the *Künstler* cantata—see vol. iv), to the subject, or to Wagner's own proscription of the Chorus from his present artwork—the reader must decide. For Liszt makes *no* reply till five weeks later, and then evades the topic thus: "Best thanks for your Dante letter. For answer I hope to bring you the first half of my work to Zurich, perhaps, together with some other things that will make my endeavour plainer to you than any words of mine could."

Now that we have plumped to earth once more, shall we take our hero for a little jaunt? We can't precisely date it, but it seems to fit in best here, since the Spring had been a rainy one and Thames steamers never started much before the summer. *As* puts it after the seventh concert, but that is immaterial: "That evening [never mind which] Wagner spoke so glowingly of the French, and their culinary art powers, that we arranged a whitebait dinner at

Greenwich at the Ship, one such as the ministers sat down to. Edward Roeckel, the brother of August, came up from Bath for the occasion [?], and was the giver of the feast [I have my doubts]. We went by boat. I remember well the journey, for poor Wagner had an attack of *mal-de-mer*, as though he actually were at sea [smacks of a letter to Lüders—*vid. inf.*]; the wind was blowing hard and the water rough. He appreciated highly the whitebait, especially the dish of devilled ones, and the much-decried cooking of the British ascended several degrees in his opinion."

In the rough we may accept this tale, for Glasenapp relates that Wagner afterwards waxed eloquent to Herwegh, and the rest at Zurich, about the virtue of those whitebait and their varied cooking. But, as usual, Praeger spoils his English story by the cheap insertion he lets into it for German length of skirt: "Wagner insisted on Edward Roeckel, who lived at Bath, being present at our political feast; so he at once was called by telegraph to London. He accepted, too, on one condition, namely that the whole expenses of our outing should fall to his account" (*Wie*, p. 275). Most unfortunately, Wagner's first letter to Praeger from Zurich thereafter, July 7, knocks the bottom out of that with the remark, "My best respects to Eduard; it was a great pity I did not see him again," whereas P. himself locates the trip within the *last* ten days of Wagner's stay. If E. Roeckel "was the giver of the feast," or even attended it, we may be sure he was not telegraphed for, and that it occurred at a more inclement season of the year, viz. about Easter (see 237 *sup.*); if the feast occurred in June, and E. was telegraphed for—which is by no means unlikely—we may be sure that he did not come up. Of course it would not really matter, had *Wie* not turned an "again" of Wagner's ("*noch einmal*") into "*öfter*"; but there is quiet fun to be drawn from the startling news divulged to none save Parallax's former countrymen: to wit, that the Ship Hotel is a place where "the politically important dinner of the English Ministry peacefully assembles the heads of the various parties, ostensibly for a good meal [off 'loaves and fishes'?], but strictly for no other reason than quite by accident to raise the veil on certain ticklish points of their diplomatic intentions [can he mean the Lord Mayor's banquet?] and to feel the people's pulse!" The note of exclamation is *Wie's* very own; it would look like imitation, did I double it.

Having worked our way up to such distinguished company, we will rise a step higher. For—Majesty itself attends the seventh concert, June 11, advertised in all that morning's papers as "By Command." The programme fitly opens with a liegeman's work :—

Part I.

Overture, "Chevy Chase"	Macfarren.
Aria, "Di militari onori" (Jessonda), Signor Belletti .	Spohr.
Sinfonia (Jupiter)	Mozart.
Scena, "Ocean, thou mighty monster" (Oberon), Mme Clara Novello (clarinet obbligato, Mr Williams)	Weber.
Overture, "Tannhäuser"	Wagner.

Part II.

Sinfonia, No. 8	Beethoven.
Aria, "Ave Maria," Madame Clara Novello, (clarinet obbligato, Mr Williams)	Cherubini.
Duetto, "Quel sepolcro" (Agnese), Mme Clara Novello and Signor Belletti . .	Paer.
Overture, "Anacreon"	Cherubini.

No doubt it was a feeling of duty towards a subject, that moved Queen Victoria to attend a concert of the New Philharmonic (p. 205*n*) ten weeks before she honoured its much older rival; but it would have made an immense difference to Wagner's outlook here, had she deigned to grace the *Lohengrin* concert of March 26 instead of waiting till the mischief done by headlong critics, particularly to the conductor's own feelings, had become irreparable. Himself he writes Fischer (letter 43), "We are to have the Queen of England at our next concert; it will be rather interesting if, under warrant of arrest for high treason, I conduct before her and the court. Other people might take example by it." Again, four days after the concert—a portion of that indiscreetly-published letter which Wagner certainly desired his good old friend to "let go farther," as "example" to the rulers of his fatherland :—

"The Queen, who had consented to attend the 7th concert (a rare event, by no means happening every year), commanded a repetition of the overture to *Tannhäuser*.* Now, if it was highly

* The official advertisement in the *Times* etc. of that morning had announced the March from the same work, whilst some of the critics refer to a rumour (*vid. inf.*) that the overture had been substituted for it at the last moment *at the composer's own desire.* If we combine herewith the quaint allusion in

gratifying in itself that the Queen should disregard my sorely compromised political situation (which, moreover, had been publicly referred-to with great malice by the Times) and make no demur to attending a public performance conducted by me,—her further behaviour to myself afforded me a touching recompense for all annoyances and low attacks endured here previously.

"She and Prince Albert sat directly in front of the orchestra, and after the Tannhäuser-overture—which brought the first part to a close—they applauded with a kindliness almost amounting to a challenge, whereat the audience broke into the liveliest prolonged applause. During the interval, moreover, the Queen sent for me to the salon, and received me before her whole court with the cordial words, 'I am delighted to make your acquaintance, your composition has enraptured me!' Further, during a lengthy conversation in which Prince Albert joined, she enquired after my other works, and asked if it were not possible to translate my operas into Italian, so that she might hear them too in London. Naturally I was obliged to say No to that, and explain that my present visit was a passing one, as the only thing open to me here, the control of a concert-establishment, was really not my true affair.—At the concert's close both Queen and Prince applauded me again most kindly.—I tell you this, as I know it will please you; and I willingly allow you to let a portion of my news go farther, as I see how much error and malice with regard to myself and my London stay has to be set right or refuted."

It is odd to turn back to the first letter from London to Otto, and read in its new German edition: "There isn't the remotest chance of any special interest, particularly of the Court, in my operas or a decent German theatre; the Queen, for instance, has the most trivial of taste"—I do not think it can have been Sainton, who thus ran down her Majesty to the writer, as we have heard the same remark to all intents from Dreisterner, and practically at the selfsame time (p. 155*n*). But it has rather surprised me that none of the English reviewers of *Richard Wagner to Mathilde Wesendonck* should have singled out the interesting

Wagner's letter of July 7 to Praeger, "Lüders will not, I hope, have used my letter to Prince Albert for dressing lobster-salad with? I have often had bad luck with letters"—we may conclude that Wagner had actually drafted such a letter in the Sainton-Lüders rooms, and *thus* obtained a second hearing for his overture by dint of Royal command.

announcement made from Paris five years hence (Sept. 30, 1860): "Queen Victoria has taken it into her head to want to hear my Lohengrin this winter; the manager of Covent Garden Theatre has looked me up, and the Queen wants Lohengrin in English. It would have to be in February, but I know nothing more precise about it, nor even if I shall be able to entertain it." Probably the scheme fell through for reason of the notorious fact that the composer could not get away from Paris and his *Tannhäuser* that winter. Had it not been for the death of Prince Albert early the next, might we not have had *Lohengrin* in London some thirteen years before we did?

Wagner's pleasant memories of this interview with our beloved Queen were more than a nine days' wonder, for he writes to Liszt July 5 in much the same strain as to Fischer June 15: "Probably you have already heard that Queen Victoria behaved quite charmingly to me? She attended the seventh concert with Prince Albert, and, as they wanted something of mine, I had the Tannhäuser-overture repeated—which assisted me to a little outward reparation. And I also appear to have pleased the Queen muchly: in an interview, which she demanded of me after the first part of the concert, she shewed herself so cordially—kind, that I really felt touched by it. In truth they were the first in England to venture to speak up for me without disguise: if one reflects that they were dealing with a political outcast, under warrant of arrest for high treason, one will surely think me right to thank the pair of them right heartily."—Did he thank them on paper, one wonders, and is *that* the proper explanation of the "letter to Prince Albert" mentioned in my last footnote? I fancy not, or he would certainly have mentioned it to courtier Liszt.

Of course the *Times* and *Daily News* run a dead heat with their critiques of this concert, the very next day, but Secretary Hogarth shall be the first to engage our attention:—

The seventh concert, last evening, was "by command." It was honoured, that is to say, by the presence of the Queen and his Royal Highness Prince Albert, to whom, we believe, it is usual on such occasions to submit the programme of the performance. [*Programme.*]

The repetition of Wagner's Overture to Tannhäuser, so soon after its previous performance, was, we take it for granted, in consequence

of a desire expressed by the royal visitors to hear a work by a composer of great German celebrity, which has excited so much curiosity, and has been made the subject of so much criticism in this country. A second hearing has not changed the impression made on us by the first. This overture is a composition so entirely intended for the theatre, to serve as a prologue to a dramatic work, that it is impossible to judge of its merits from merely hearing it in the concert-room, where, indeed, it should not be performed [! ! !]. To those who have not the key to its design it must appear very obscure ; and, considered simply as music, it lacks, to our ear, regularity of form and clear rhythmical melody.

Macfarren's Overture to Chevy Chase is a very remarkable production. The tale of the—"Woeful hunting that did once on Chevy chase befal" is treated with great power ; and the skilful introduction of the old ballad-tune is exceedingly happy and effective. This overture was warmly and deservedly applauded [was not the other?]. The remainder of the concert consisted of well-known pieces. The two symphonies were admirably performed ; but Herr Wagner, as usual, exposed himself to criticism by taking the times of some of the movements differently from the usual practice here. But it by no means follows, because this is the case, that he must be always in the wrong. The vocal music was excellent, judiciously chosen, and magnificently performed. The royal visitors seemed highly gratified ; and, between the parts, the Queen sent for Herr Wagner, with whom her Majesty and the Prince conversed for a considerable time.

The royal party was numerous. It consisted of the Queen and Prince Albert, the Prince of Wales, Prince Alfred, the Princess Hohenlohe Langenburg, Princess Adelaide of Hohenlohe, and Princess Feodore of Hohenlohe. The Queen and Prince were attended by the Duchess of Sutherland, the Duchess of Wellington, the Lord Chamberlain, the Master of the Horse, and the Lord Steward. The room was exceedingly full.

Wagner was correct, then, when he said he was received in full Court, and we now learn that he met our present King, apparently for the only time. There is an air of almost jealousy about this report, though—for the Directors were evidently not also "sent for" ; moreover it betrays that they were strongly opposed to a repetition of the *Tannhäuser* overture, and there we may again trace the effect of that "bold assertion" we wot of. Hogarth's whole tone is quite unfriendly for once, scarcely relieved by the singular "it by no means follows that he must be *always* wrong." Neither is he much more cordial in the *Illustrated* of the 16th :—

The concert being "by command," the programme, of course, was accommodated to the wishes of the illustrious visitors; and hence Wagner's overture to "Tannhäuser" was repeated, though it had been performed only a few weeks before. In regard to it we have only to add to what we have already said, that it was admirably executed, and more favourably received than before [then you should have given it at the 8th concert as well]. The Royal visitors were evidently gratified. After its performance they sent for the composer, with whom they conversed for a considerable time. . . . [Chevy Chase, "hitherto unknown to the public,"] this overture received the greatest justice from the conductor and was warmly applauded. . . . The room was crowded; and the concert, taken altogether, was the most brilliant and successful of the season.

Wellnigh deserted by the semi-official reporter, Wagner could not expect much mercy from the standing foe; yet Davison again strews wheat among the tares of his *Times* critique, June 12:—

Her Majesty the Queen, with Prince Albert, two of the Royal children, and a numerous *suite*, attended the sixth [i.e. seventh] concert, which took place last night. The rooms, though better filled than on any previous occasion during the present season, were by no means so crowded as is usual when the Queen honours the performances with her presence. The illustrious visitors arrived shortly after 8 o'clock, and the band played the national anthem as they entered the room. [*Programme.*]

We were glad to hear another English work at the Philharmonic, and more especially in the presence of Her Majesty, who has enjoyed but few opportunities of appreciating what her loyal subjects can do in the way of musical composition [really neatly put]. Mr Macfarren's animated and brilliant overture was a very favourable example. Although written 18 years ago, it has never before been given at these concerts; but its enthusiastic reception last night will, it is to be hoped, insure it a place for the future. The overture to "Chevy Chase" requires no apology at the hands of the "native talent" apostles. It is not merely a masterly piece of scoring, but a genial inspiration; and of this the late Mendelssohn—who was much quicker to recognize merit where he found it, in England, than the majority of our influential professors—was quite aware when he introduced it at the celebrated Leipzic *Gewandhaus* concerts, then under his direction. Although the time was a little too quick, the performance generally was strikingly good. Herr Wagner—to his credit be it said—took as much pains with it as he did with Mr Potter's symphony at the 6th concert.

Of the two symphonies we may say at once that Beethoven's went by

far the best. The only fault we could find was with the extreme slowness of the minuet—which, though "*tempo di minuetto*" is indicated in the score, being in style entirely opposed to the stately old dance-minuet, should not be played with such a bag-wig gravity of measure [cf *Prose* IV. 308-10]. In the trio, where the violoncello *obligato* has of late years been allotted to all the violoncellos, Herr Wagner maintained the original design of the composer, and gave it to the principal alone. Strange to say, however, in this instance, we prefer the innovation to the first intention; and we think Beethoven would have shared the same opinion, but that his unhappy malady prevented him from judging aurally of the effect of his work. It is marvellous to think what this great man composed when afflicted with utter deafness—and to find so little in his latest works that can offend the most delicate ear, yet so many combinations of harmony and instruments as original as they are successful and beautiful.

We have said, of the two symphonies that of Beethoven went *the best;* but this hardly conveys the truth. The symphony in C of Mozart—so well-named "Jupiter," from its colossal grandeur, its magnificent scholarship, and the freshness, life, and noble simplicity of its themes—was, to speak mildly, sacrificed to the whims and caprices of the conductor. All that we have considered it our duty to advance against Herr Wagner's "new readings" of some of the works of the great masters amounts to nothing in comparison with our objection, from first to last, to his conception of Mozart's most prodigious symphony. Let our musical readers imagine, if they can, the opening *allegro*—which derives charm and distinction from its frank and vigorous character—tortured and spoiled by every species of affectation that could be expected from an ultra-sentimental boarding-school miss before she had been taught better [cf *Prose* IV. 316]! "*Ritardando*" here, "*diminuendo*" there—false and unnatural accents without end—dragged back and tormented where its onward course should be impetuous and unimpeded—like a spirited charger goaded and incensed by the wavering of a timid and inexperienced rider—it was altogether unlike itself. The divine *andante*, played *adagio* (and "*senza*" instead of "*con sordini*") was so disfigured by unmeaning and unauthorized "*rallentandi*" that its spirit evaporated and it sounded like a piece of maudlin insipidity. The *minuetto*, too, though marked "*allegretto*," was somniferously dirge-like [*ibid.* 308], and robbed of its flow and rhythm by the incessant liberties taken with the time. The *finale*—probably the finest piece of orchestral writing extant, although, according to the Wagnerian doctrine, Mozart's instrumental music was only a river that flowed into the immense ocean of Beethoven's symphonies—in accordance with a frequent habit of the new conductor was led off so quick that

the passages could not be heard distinctly. In spite of this, however, it was the least objectionable part of the performance. Herr Wagner apparently tried in vain, at various points, to pull back the orchestra; the orchestra would not have it. As Owen Glendower might have called "spirits from the vasty deep" without the spirits coming to his call, so might the Philharmonic conductor have urged his followers to an occasional display of drawling sentimentality equally to no purpose. Indifferent to the blandishments of his insinuating *bâton*, tired of the restless changes and modifications through which the fire of the first three movements had been quenched, the members of the orchestra made a stand for themselves, accepted the first indicated speed from the conductor—which, though quicker than they had been accustomed to, suited them very well—and, fine fellows as they are, maintained it to the last, bringing the movement, where all the subjects are combined, to a triumphant climax. This time the charger was let loose, and carried its rider, *nolens volens*, and "*ventre à terre*," to the goal.

The overture to *Tannhäuser*—repeated for the advantage of his Royal Highness Prince Albert (instead of the March, which had been announced, from the same opera)—does not improve on closer acquaintance. So much incessant noise, so uninterrupted and singular an exhibition of pure cacophony, was never heard before. And all this is intended to describe the delights and fascinations which lured the unwary to the secret abode of the Goddess of Beauty, in the Thuringian mountains—according to a popular German legend of the Middle Ages. In his music to the *Walpurgis Night*, Mendelssohn gets up a magnificent clamour to describe the diabolical machinations by which the Druids frighten away the Roman soldiers from their place of worship on the 1st of May. But the clamour of Mendelssohn's Druids is nothing to the obstreperous demonstrations of Herr Wagner's Venus. What would Rossini—who, in writing from Paris to Bologna a description, piece by piece, of Bellini's *Puritani*, on arriving at "Suoni la tromba," says, "I need tell you nothing of the duet; *you must have heard it*"—what would Rossini have written to his Bolognese friend about this overture? Words would have failed him, and the pen have dropped from his hand. Such a wonderful performance, however, as that of the Philharmonic band last night would, had it been possible, have made even *Tannhäuser* acceptable; but it was not possible, and we sincerely hope that no execution, however superb, will ever make such senseless discord pass, in England, for a manifestation of art and genius.

According to received etiquette, when the Queen attends the concerts there are no encores, and the audience redemanded Mr Macfarren's overture and the *allegretto* from Beethoven's symphony in vain. In obedience to the same etiquette, which forbids "repeats"

in the symphonies, these (except in the first *allegro* of the *Jupiter*) were also suppressed. The absence of a solo instrumental performance was equally in deference to established rule; and of this, perhaps, *bonâ fide* subscribers have some right to complain, since, while there are only eight concerts in the season, there are usually many more than eight *virtuosi* ready and anxious to play, and whom the public would not object to hear. The vocal music was good and well sung, but offered nothing new for comment. The Royal party remained until the end.

As I have reprinted Davison's critique *in extenso* more as an historic document than anything else, I must leave the reader to formulate his own comments on this extraordinary incitation of the band to breach of discipline. When he has done so, will he kindly follow me to the *Morning Post* of June 13, where Glover starts with due praise of Macfarren's overture, passes to Mozart's symphony, and then devotes the bulk of his article to a general denunciation of Wagner and all his works:—

Of Herr Wagner's extraordinary overture to "Tannhäuser" we have already spoken on more than one occasion, but we may take this opportunity of saying something of its author. The state of musical art in Germany and England is widely different. In the former country, having passed through every grade of excellence to perfection, it long ago reached its highest point, and is now fast falling to decay. Corruption has seized upon Germania's lovely muse; the subtle poison of a false philosophy runs through all her veins—the taint has reached her heart. Deck her now in flowers and paint; convulse her beautiful limbs with galvanic shocks—make her talk when she should sing, think when she should feel, rave when she should persuade, horrify when she should delight—in vain! the withering hand of death is on her—her days are numbered. It were idle to complain of this. It is a mere repetition of Nature's history. Birth, progress, maturity, decay, death—these are the five great words that have described and ever will describe the career of all things, animate or inanimate, which the world includes, and no man,—not even Herr Wagner—can change the laws which they express, or limit their operation. There can be no doubt whatever that erroneous principles do more harm than erroneous acts. Thus, for instance (to put an extreme case) the man who commits a murder does less wrong to society, than the cunning sophist, or self-deceived philosopher who, though innocent himself of bloodshed, seeks with all the blandishment of words to justify that hideous crime.

By a parity of reasoning therefore we conclude that Herr Wagner's musical principles have done more mischief to art than could even the

worst of his musical works. The most hopeless mediocrity—the most insane rhapsodies, might be passed over in silence, or merely provoke a smile; but the dissemination of false theories, rendered still more seductive and dangerous by the brilliant wit, keen satire, imagination, fervid eloquence and occasional glimpses of truth which this gentleman's literary works include, would require a strong hand to oppose them, and still in the end, that opposition would prove useless; for, the downward course once taken, none but a Sisyphus would attempt to arrest it. Herr Wagner is a necessary evil. We believe him to be quite in earnest, and perfectly conscientious. He feels inwardly impelled to act as he does, feels that he has a mission, which is to destroy and not to complete. He is the chosen instrument and we look upon him with a kind of superstitious reverence. Germany, however, and not England, is the proper arena for his exploits. There he is at home and natural—one of the last links in a chain which will soon end where it began, in artistic nothingness; the necessary expression of something, which if [he] did not, somebody else must express; but here he is out of his element. England—young and fresh [say, green] in musical feeling, full of reverence for those great masters whom she is only now beginning fully to understand and appreciate, deriving all her ideas of excellence from them and striving to found a national school upon the sure foundation which such models afford—cannot possibly relish corruption. England is under the influence of the Handels, Haydns, Mozarts, Beethovens, Mendelssohns, Spohrs etc. [I had no idea there was more than one of each of them—yet the family Bach presumably is squeezed into "etc."!] and therefore not prepared, thank Heaven, for Herr Wagner's revelations. When, like Italy and Germany she shall have completed her musical course and run to seed, then will some significant sign of the times—some English Wagner—appear to make our darkness visible.

The symphony of Beethoven was much better played than that of Mozart, and the vocal music entrusted to Madame Clara Novello and Signor Belletti was done ample justice to. The rooms were well attended.

Native Talent has waxed self-righteous at last, yet it does not even name Purcell among its list of models, nor one promising English musician (the author included) of that "national school" it is striving so strangely to base on a foreign foundation. It is ungrateful, too; for Wagner had been penalised with the conducting of more British music than any of his precursors at these concerts, whilst Davison himself has admitted that "Herr Wagner took great pains with it" and his rendering of Macfarren's overture "was strikingly good." But Native Talent—even if in this

case it may not be half suspected of an *arrière pensée* for Berlioz* —has evidently been reading the commencement of *Opera and Drama* in the *Musical World*, and trembles to think of the consequences.

Dreisterner's insult to the nearest-of-kin of the other representative of Native Talent having been reprinted in the last-named journal only two days prior to the 7th concert (see p. 216 *sup.*), we will take the *Sunday Times* of June 17 before the two more influential weeklies. Here, after the Queen's presence and Macfarren's overture have been dealt with, H. Smart proceeds:—

Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony received a performance which would, doubtless, be considered perfection by those who relish a Beethoven sonata treated with all the lack-a-daisical airs and graces that befit a modern *notturno;* but to our taste it was simply ruining fine music, and twisting the talents of a great orchestra to a very unworthy purpose. Is it possible that we, in England, should have been all these years in ignorance of the truth as to this certainly complicated but extremely well known composition? Can it be possible that Herr Richard Wagner is right, and all the rest of the world wrong?† That it is proper for the first movement to contain as many, and as whimsical changes of time as Liszt would embellish one of his own eccentric displays withal? That Mozart made a blunder when he wrote "con sordini" against the stringed department of his score of the *adagio?* That though he did not *write*, he intended a fearfully-drawling *ritardando* in the same movement, at those points of imitation which herald the return of the subject? That it is right for the time of the *minuet* to be drawled down to nearly one-half of its initial rate before

* See Berlioz to Liszt Dec. 17, 54, concerning the first performance of *l'Enfance du Christ* in Paris seven days earlier: "On m'annonce des choses superbes dans les journaux de demain, nous verrons bien. D'Ortigue fait celui des *Débats*. Mais le mieux étudié sans doute, sera celui de Glover dans le Morning Post parceque Glover est un musicien distingué et qu'il a écrit avec ma partition sous les yeux."

† It is *very* possible as against the contemporary musical world, since Wagner at his most receptive epoch had imbibed the Mozartian traditions from old Dionys Weber, Director of the Prague Conservatoire, who himself had frequently heard Mozart conduct in person (cf. i, 139-40); whilst they would be the more indelibly stamped on his memory in this particular instance, as it was Dionys who first performed for the young Wagner his youthful symphony, which he tells us was modelled not only on Beethoven, but also on "Mozart, especially as shewn in his great C major symphony" (*P.* I. 7). For the general question of the proper rendering of Mozart, derived from those traditions, see *P.* IV. 192.

the close of its first section? If all these things, besides others, "too numerous to mention," are right, and according to some testamentary direction of Mozart, now for the first time unsealed, this was a fine performance of the *Jupiter* Symphony. If not, it was disagreeable to the last degree. We have before cautioned Herr Wagner [hoity-toity!] that England is one of the most unsafe countries in the world wherein to venture on these absurd experiments. The intrinsic beauties of such compositions are far too well understood for any of these dandified nonsenses of style in their performance to be otherwise than repugnant to the educated taste of the country.

With the exception of two errors in timing, the No. 8 was very finely performed. The exceptions were the minuet, which the conductor persisted, against the manifest inclination of the orchestra, in leading off in the same way he did that of Mozart's E flat symphony at the previous concert, namely, at about the pace the *minuet* of yore was treated in the ball-room. The movement was certainly never so performed in its author's lifetime, and its effect on Monday evening was inexpressibly tiresome. The last movement, also, was taken—according to an apparently established custom with Herr Wagner—just so fast as to make its execution little short of a *scramble* on the part of the orchestra.

Of the overture to *Tannhäuser* we have already said all we deem necessary—except, indeed, that a second hearing has certainly strengthened our objections to it, and the school [?] to which it belongs. Its repetition is stated to have been in accordance with a command from the Palace, resulting from an application made by the composer to Prince Albert. Had it been otherwise, the directors would certainly have been censurable for so occupying space which should have been appropriated to music of recognised excellence. At its conclusion, Herr Wagner is understood to have been summoned to the royal presence, and to have been there detained some time in conversation. It is fortunate to be a German in this country and equally unfortunate to be an Englishman. Mr Macfarren, with whose overture to *Chevy Chase* it would be an offence to musical common-sense to compare the Tannhäuser, may, we fancy, write long and laboriously enough [that's it] before he receives a similar compliment, or, indeed, any public recognition of his existence on the part of the government, save that privilege of *paying* towards its support, which, in most other countries, would be supposed to entitle to at least an equal share in whatever advantage might result from the influence of the court and its parasite, fashion.

Evil communications corrupt good manners, and Native Talent has turned vulgar at last under the taunts of Three-stars, forgetful alike of an uncle's position and of the fact that it was Wagner, not Macfarren, who conducted this concert; also that the graceful

compliment of Queen Victoria might conceivably have brought about the exile's restoration to *his* native land—which surely would have suited Native Talent's book.

And now for a goodbye to Chorley, who is mercifully brief, his only quality of mercy, in the *Athenæum* of June 16 :—

Monday evening's *Philharmonic Concert* displayed such a rarity as a royal visit to a room by no means crowded. "The world" does well to stay away from execution so coarse and caricatured as Herr Wagner's treatment of Mozart's and Beethoven's symphonies, and from music so utterly antipathetic as the 'Tannhäuser' overture, which was repeated (it was said in the room) by desire of the composer,—and appeared to please the subscribers less [? !] even than on its first performance. The Concert was opened by Mr Macfarren's overture to 'Chevy Chase.'—Madame Clara Novello and Signor Belletti were the singers,—and did their best, in spite of the orchestra. Herr Wagner's engagement is near its close ; and modern German romanticism has been indulged with such a trial as is unprecedented in the annals of the Philharmonic Society. But who—or what—is to entice back the audience that has been frightened away by the indulgence?—It is understood that at the next annual meeting a reconsideration of the laws of the *Philharmonic Society* is to be urged by some of the members, naturally enough discouraged at the present aspect of affairs. We may have something to say concerning the statutes as they stand, next week.

That is all but Chorley's final word on Wagner in the *Athenæum*, for the next week's issue drags him but incidentally in, as shocking example of the evils of the present Philharmonic system, in a passage quoted long ago (cap. II. *supra*), whilst the issue of June 30 dismisses him thus : "It must be felt as a relief to every one concerned — Directors, audience, conductor — that the Philharmonic Concerts are over for the season. The eighth was little better, or little worse, than its predecessors, save that, the excitement of curiosity having subsided, the slovenliness and exaggeration which have marked the performances as a whole seemed to press with a weight of extra weariness." So we are rid of Chorley at last (save for the Appendix), and good riddance too.

Facetious Davison is not so soon to be disposed of. In his *M. World* of the 9th June he had just reached cap II. of *Opera and Drama*, with its witticisms on Rossini. To that on the maestro's alleged boast that he could consign even Mozart's *chef d'œuvre* to oblivion by composing the subject all over again (see

Prose II. 44) D. adds a note: "Rossini never said any such thing. On the contrary, when entreated by some *wise* friends to set anew Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, he indignantly rejected the idea.—Ed. *M. W.*" Possibly the Ed. was right, and Wagner wrong, anent this *on dit;* but where was Davison's keen sense of humour? That sense has a fine field for play in a 3-column leader on poor Dreisterner, the flowers of which we have culled already; here it is only necessary to note that *this* is the issue, i.e. two days before the 7th concert, in which are reproduced the insult to Sir Geo. Smart and the silly kid-glove fable. Stay! we learn further, "Dreisterner Plauderein has killed the [New York] Gazette, with missiles directed from London and Paris. The unfortunate journal has been swamped outright"—but our rejoicing is premature, for—"in the act of dissolution [it] has made over its name and birth-(copy-)right to *The New Musical Review*, which, swelled in importance by the addition to its title of the words '*and Gazette*,' has assumed a perter style, and from a dead flat, which it was, has (thanks chiefly to ***) become as lively and pugnacious as a rat. It bites. It stings. It fumes at the mouth . . . under the infliction of Meyerbeer. 'Giacomo,' as usual, is severely handled by the Hammish Aristarchus, whose letters (what indignity!) are now printed in small type. No matter what is the immediate subject, Meyerbeer is lugged in by the ears," etc.

Pass to the issue of June 16. Here we have more *Opera and Drama* (chiefly the Weber part), a demi-Wagner leader of one column, and the report on the 7th concert. An abridgment is all that we need of the last, as it does not materially differ from the critique in the *Times*:—

There were no encores; the Queen objects to encores. There were no "repeats" (except in the first movement of Mozart's symphony); the Queen objects to "repeats." There was no concerto, nor any [instr.] solo; the Queen objects to concertos and solos. To the last objection the subscribers have some right to object themselves; but, being loyal subjects, they objected to object to that objection. They might also have objected to a repetition of *Tannhäuser*, which they had heard at a previous concert, but that it was sanctioned by the Prince Consort, who, at Herr Wagner's request, caused it to be substituted for a march from the same opera which had been announced. A second hearing of this "long-winded prelude" (*Athenæum*), although the execution was magnificent, rather lowered than raised it in the opinion of the subscribers [?], who

might also have objected to Herr Wagner's fantastic, old-maidish, and ultra-sentimental reading of Mozart's superb symphony, which, to speak in metaphor, was almost killed by his caresses. . . . In the glorious finale the orchestra took the matter in their own hands, and set all Herr Wagner's attempts at pulling them back at defiance. They would not have it. "Not by no means." The "Future" was amazed; the "Books" were ignored. Where was the Hammish Aristarchus? [At Brighton?—p. 263*n*.]

Beethoven's Symphony was better in every respect; and the horns in the trio were accompanied by a single violoncello (Mr Lucas), as the composer intended, and not by all the violoncellos, as of late years, according to the "Book" of Michael. We agree with Michael, and think that Beethoven, for once in a way, made a miscalculation of effect. Mr Macfarren's vigorous and splendid overture, composed eighteen years ago, for a musical drama at Drury Lane Theatre—which, though introduced by Mendelssohn at the Gewandhaus concerts (Leipsic), was never before performed by the London Philharmonic Society—was eminently successful. Herr Wagner took great pains with it. It was remarkably well executed, and (like the *allegretto* in Beethoven's symphony) was unanimously encored by the audience. "Etiquette," however, forbad.

The vocal music went well, and the overture to *Anacreon* dismissed the audience in sonorous and brilliant harmony.

The demi-Wagner leader aforesaid brings us at once into contact with Hector Berlioz, of whom we shall shortly see something in person, and who had conducted his first concert of this New Philharmonic season the previous Wednesday, two days after Wagner's 7th Old. Inspired or not, it is a singular anticipation of the famous French *Non credo* of nearly five years later, and as such demands quotation in full, more especially since it seems to have escaped the notice of all historians hitherto. Quoth Davison, *M. World*, June 16, 1855:—

In the programme of the New Philharmonic Society's last concert we find, among other remarks in reference to M. Hector Berlioz, the following:—

> To those desirous of becoming acquainted with the characteristic features of the 'New School of Music,' the performance of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Childe Harold* cannot fail to be interesting. M. Berlioz, in France, and Herr Wagner, in Germany, are the acknowledged chiefs of the school; and, by a somewhat singular concatenation of circumstances, both being at the present time at the head of the Philharmonic Societies of London, the musical public is enabled to judge of and estimate the style of music of which these composers' works form a type.

Now this seems to us anything but kind of W[illiam] P[ole]—who analyses the programmes at such length and with such zealous eloquence. Herr Wagner has made a signal failure in this country, as a composer and as a *chef d'orchestre.* M. Berlioz, on the contrary —in Exeter-Hall at any rate—has achieved as signal a triumph in both capacities. Without entering here into an examination of the individual and relative merits of the two, as *inventors* or makers of music—which, nevertheless, would form a highly interesting topic for discussion—we would call W. P.'s attention to the fact, that while Herr Wagner, whatever may be his general acquirements, is decidedly an unskilful conductor (since he cannot marshal and control his orchestra), M. Berlioz is one of the best in Europe, the best, perhaps, since Mendelssohn, who, in this, as in every other manifestation of art-practice, excelled all his contemporaries as greatly as he excelled them all (even Herr Wagner) in genius and imagination. [It was to a Bartholater of this stripe, that the authorship of "Judaism" had been denounced!]

Under these circumstances the fact of placing M. Berlioz and Herr Wagner in juxtaposition, as "acknowledged chiefs" of a "new school"—about which W. P. would appear to entertain a somewhat vague idea—conveys a slight, rather than a compliment, to M. Berlioz, who, at least when conducting the concerts of the New Philharmonic Society, ought to be mentioned in the New Philharmonic programmes with respect, or not at all. If the managers of the Society have no very great opinion of M. Berlioz, either as composer or conductor, why did they engage him to direct two of the concerts at which it was agreed that a large quantity of his own music should be introduced?

Why, too, were not precautions taken, on an occasion so important, that there should be no falling off in the strength of the orchestra, which was so efficient all the season, up to the very moment of M. Berlioz's arrival, and then collapsed? The band ought rather to be reinforced than enfeebled when such music as the dramatic symphony of *Romeo and Juliet* is to be given. As it was, however, a great deal that should have been done was unavoidably omitted, and much of what remained (instance, the *scherzo of Queen Mab*) was sacrificed. [This, the "*fête*" and "garden-scene," were the only portions given.] . . . All the choral and solo vocal parts, too, were abandoned as impracticable. Where was the fine chorus that, in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony [May 2], came out with such vigour, point, and freshness, under the *bâton* of Dr. Wylde? . . .

All this looks very much like indifference towards M. Berlioz, who has, nevertheless, great claims to consideration from all who are interested in the welfare of the Society. Why invite him to conduct at all? Dr Wylde got on famously, and every one was satisfied—even Professor

Dreisterner Plauderein Praeger, of Hamm; even ourselves, so difficult to satisfy. Why then invite M. Berlioz, unless to be fêted and honoured, as he merits?

Happily, M. Berlioz is a vast favourite with the Exeter Hall public, and could not easily be swamped. He came and was received as before. He was not swamped, but achieved a new triumph. Yea—"by Abs and by Adnan!"—he roused up his hearers to enthusiasm, and their applause made the walls tremble!

I have travelled far beyond the comparison with Wagner, in fact to the leader's end (with trifling omissions), as the latter part both explains and confirms Wagner's comment to Liszt on "the very inadequate execution of the *Romeo* symphony"; but, before passing to the actual reunion of these two protagonists, I must cap friend Davison's remarks with those of Smart and Glover. Smart first, from an issue of the *Sunday Times* already cited (June 17):—

In the New Philharmonic programme this extraordinary composition [*Romeo*] is said to belong to that "New School of Music" of which "M. Berlioz in France and Herr Wagner in Germany, are the acknowledged chiefs." This is not a fair statement of the case. M. Berlioz is the originator of this new style of music, while Herr Wagner is his imitator; and, like most imitators, has taken just those external features of his model which stand out most prominently, and has either neglected or been unable to catch the inner qualities—that powerful suggestiveness, for example, of all kinds of poetic imagery, or what is aptly termed "the romantic idea"—which often, with Berlioz's music, comes out with sufficient force to charm the unprejudiced listener into complete forgetfulness of its departure from all the received customs of music. . . . Berlioz and Wagner may be similar enough in their rejection of the classical *forms* of composition; but here the resemblance ceases. In point of invention, Wagner's music may be searched in vain [how *much* do you know of it?] for anything resembling the lengthened, broad, streaming phraseology of this movement [Garden-scene]; while in point of sentiment, the German is hard, uncompromising, square, by contrast with the luscious warmth and tenderness of the French composer with whom it is sought to compare him.

Glover, whose personal relations with Berlioz were fairly intimate, and whose cantata *Tam O'Shanter* will be conducted by the great Frenchman at the New Philharmonic of July 4, follows suit in the *Morning Post* of June 18:—

We regretted to see in the official programme of the society, which usually includes analyses of the various works performed, and critical remarks thereon, a comparison drawn between M. Berlioz and Herr Wagner, which appeared to place these gentlemen on equal ground. The resemblance goes no further than this, that both professedly belong to the ultra-modern romantic school of instrumental music; but here is the difference; M. Berlioz is the originator of that school, a consummate master of instrumentation and a poet in his art. Herr Wagner is a follower, a mediocre musician, and although, perhaps, a poet in imagination, is quite unable to express his ideas in music.

On three consecutive days you have the two greatest of the 'modern' composers pitted square against each other, for the first time, I believe, and much to the detriment of the one who nowadays has far outshone his fellow. Was it spontaneous, this expression of wrath by those three Britons? Bribery of course was quite out of the question, if merely for reason that Berlioz had not the wherewithal; but we shall soon learn that he did frequent the office of James Davison, and in view of his later Paris declaration it is not beyond the bounds of probability that the Frenchman expressed to the Scotsman his dislike of being placed in the same *galère* with the upstart German. The "slight, rather than a compliment," itself has a Gallic flavour, and it really looks as if Davison were acting here as mouthpiece—a perfectly willing and delighted mouthpiece—of the French conductor, or some one near him. Supposing this an intentional disclaimer, however, the situation was a most embarrassing one for Berlioz, and had been forced upon him by another of those wellnigh criminal acts of tactlessness in which Wagner's new London friends so recklessly indulged without his knowledge or complicity. Ere such a remark as that in the New Philharmonic programme were made public, the commonest courtesy demanded its submittal to both the guests in whose honour it had been drafted. As it was, unless Berlioz meant to be bracketed for good and all with Wagner—as the Weimar-Leipzig people had begun to link him, with Liszt as hyphen—it is difficult to see how in this case he could well avoid a protest, direct or indirect. The pity is, it had not been direct: in a few well-chosen words he could have pointed out the radical mistake of confounding the apple with the orange, the fig with the grape; while paying polished tribute to his German confrère, he could easily have

insisted that they should each be judged apart and without loose talk of this nebulous "new school."

Yet another point to be remembered, is that the said New Philharmonic concert took place *before* the French and German masters had shaken hands except in the most distant mode. This is clear from Wagner's letter of July to Liszt, where we hear all about his London meeting with his "new-found friend." Of course that was by no means their first, but they had never managed to kindle each other to anything like true friendly warmth before. Needless to hark back to Paris in the early forties, or to Dresden 1843—for those meetings the reader must be referred to vols. i and ii—but to the account in vol. iv of their last encounter prior to the present one I wish to add a welcome detail.* I now have it from the sole surviving witness, that in Paris 1853—presumably the same evening when Wagner recited a part of his Ring-poem—Liszt played a portion of *Cellini* to him, *with Berlioz himself as singer.* What does that prove?—you may ask. Nothing much, beyond the well-known fact of Liszt's desire to set his two best friends in harmony; yet its sequel would seem to have been the presenting to Berlioz by Liszt of that copy of *Lohengrin* possession whereof the former mentions in his letter of Sept. '55 to Wagner (*vide infra*).

Another interesting episode has not yet been made public in England, to the best of my knowledge, though its evidence has been available for the past 7 to 10 years. It is this: Six months after that brief encounter in Paris, Berlioz was offered Wagner's ancient post as Kapellmeister to the Dresden court, in so many words; he was fully prepared to accept it, too, had the offer but been formally repeated. A strange vista is opened up by the reflection, What would he have said to conducting that "music of the future" at which he plainly looked askance? Would he have transferred the whole of that department to the second in command? We will leave that riddle to the Sphinx, however, and take up our historic evidence:—

From Dresden, where he then was giving concerts (*Faust*, *Roméo* etc.), Berlioz writes Liszt Apr. 22, 54: "M. de Lüttichau has this instant left me, and after a thousand compliments has

* Elicited in sympathetic response to an enquiry prompted by a recent gratuitous attack on my literary honour; an attack I shall know how to deal with in the Appendix.

dropped me this plain hint, which coincides with your previsions: 'An excellent band ours, don't you think? A pity though, it isn't conducted as it should be; *c'est vous qui seriez* l'homme pour l'animer.'—I shall wait for him to speak out more directly." Four days later, "At the *second* attempt the Scherzo of Queen Mab went without fault from beginning to end. I cannot get over it; this orchestra is marvellous [it had not forgotten Wagner's training yet, as we shall see]. M. de Lüttichau grows more and more effusive. Reissiger overwhelms me, embraces me, *writes verses* to me—curious. The press, I'm told, is bitter-sweet, more bitter than sweet" (Wagner's Dresden experience, but Reissiger never wrote verses to *him*).—Pass to July and Paris: "The Dresden papers announce that *Cellini* is in rehearsal; but I have received no official intimation yet. Do you know anything of it?" Alas, poor Berlioz!—by autumn his nose has been put out of joint again, for all Reissiger's verses. Liszt, prime instigator of the Dresden project, now hears (Nov. 14): "M. de Lüttichau wrote me last week. He informs me they are about to mount *l'Etoile du Nord* at the Dresden theatre, and consequently cannot think of *Cellini* till towards the end of next year; assuring me, at the same time, of his good intentions as regards this work. But he doesn't say a word of the proposal made by him, at the time of my last journey, in respect of the post of maître de chapelle." Having ventured within the circle of Wagner's disappointments, Berlioz renews them in person; *Cellini* will not be given at Dresden till some twenty years after his death.

But Hans von Bülow, Liszt's diplomatic agent in bringing those four concerts about, shall tell us more of Berlioz in Wagner's ancient citadel, and how, besides the genius of the French composer himself, it was the Wagner-following there that turned them to a sounding conquest. Hans sends Liszt a very long report Apr. 30, '54, from which I select a few details:—"I have felt my enthusiasm for Berlioz increase with every hearing. Yesterday's soirée was one of the most brilliant triumphs Berlioz has celebrated in Germany. . . . Every piece on the programme was underlined with reiterated applause, *rinforzandos* never heard at Dresden since the flight of Wagner. . . . An ovation secretly prepared by the younger generation of the band (Reissiger, and even Lipinski, had opposed it that morning—tho' Reissiger has otherwise behaved very well in Berlioz' regard, his enthusiasm

curdles at the point of envy) terminated this memorable evening amid frenetic cheering from the audience. . . . The whole band and the singers are full sail on a flood of enthusiasm. They are delighted at learning the true value of their talents and capacities from this incomparable chef d'orchestre, who makes them feel the disgrace of the last five to six years of sterility; and all, commencing with M. de Lüttichau—who beams to an extent I should never have thought him capable of—would like to retain Berlioz at Dresden as maître de chapelle. . . . M. de Lüttichau has already made more than allusive advances to M. Berlioz; among other things, he has asked him to prepare and conduct Gluck's *Orphée*, which he wants to mount next season. To M. Berlioz' observation that there was no vacant place at Dresden, all being very well filled—he opposed these two plain words, 'Who knows!'—Imagine it! in the Catholic church, a week ago, Krebs [Wagner's successor] bitterly reproached and severely reprimanded the orchestra for having played so magnificently under the direction of a 'foreigner.' What a public humiliation for their autochthonous chiefs, under whom they had never arrived at displaying such ardour and zeal! . . . . As for myself, without any ostentation whatever, I enrolled enthusiasts among the artists under Berlioz' banner, above all among those of the band. Perhaps it might be as well to remind M. Berlioz, at a given date, that the first and warmest of the friends he has found at Dresden, alike in orchestra and audience, belong to the party of Wagner, and have belonged to it for ages. The words I have just written—perhaps needlessly—were suggested by my recollection of certain cacklings of Mme Berlioz apropos of Richard Wagner, which vexed me quite enough. But Mme B. [the second, tho' not legally till six months later], an excellent woman at bottom, has the fault of being a bit of a gossip, and tells a heap of anecdotes to which one should not lend too great attention."

Who knows if it were not this selfsame "Mme B." that prompted the repudiation in those London papers? In 1860 Wagner privately excuses Berlioz for his public *Non credo* with the words, "his unlucky star has given him a wicked wife, who lets herself be bribed to influence her very weak and ailing husband." * When he tells Liszt in July '55, "of a sudden we

* To Mathilde Wesendonck, March 3, 60. Cf. to Liszt, May 22, 60: "I have asked myself if God wouldn't have done better to leave women out of

found we were fellow-sufferers, and meseemed that I was—better off than Berlioz," it is difficult to apply any other meaning than one; whilst Berlioz' latest panegyrist, Julien Tiersot, sums up his hero's second partner in this crushing mot, "It is to be hoped that Marie Recio realised the prosaic ideal of stitching her husband's buttons on his coats: otherwise she would be without defence!" Berlioz himself, too, writes of her in 1860: "My domestic interior is fatiguing, irritating, almost impossible. There is not a day or hour in which I do not feel prepared to risk my life, to take the most violent determinations. I live on thought, on immensities of affection, far off from where I dwell." Of this scarcely prepossessing lady we shall catch another glimpse anon.

Fellow-sufferers these two men clearly were in yet another direction, though quite unconsciously—fellow-sufferers from the effects of eye-strain. In Wagner's case the proof is positive to-day; but the same inductive reasoning that led us, not so long ago, to the discovery that Wagner was a victim of astigmatism, has recently brought my friend Dr Geo. M. Gould (Philadelphia) to the prompt conclusion, even from the slight reference on p. 182 of the *Mathilde* book, that Berlioz was a similar victim. I believe Dr Gould is preparing an exhaustive essay on the latter case, with a number of scientific proofs from Berlioz's correspondence; meanwhile I may refer the present reader to a most striking piece of evidence, viz. the figure reproduced in letter 192 of the *Wagner-Liszt Corr.* Liszt, at least, does not seem to have shared his friends' infirmity, for this figure is at once a firmly drawn and accurate enlargement of the second of two hasty

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his scheme of Creation; it's precious seldom they're of any good, whilst the rule is that they simply harm us without reaping anything by it for themselves. The case of Berlioz has given me another opportunity of studying with anatomical exactitude how utterly a wicked wife can ruin an altogether brilliant man, and bring him into ridicule" (*Bayr. Bl.* 1900). Citing the last sentence of this, M. Tiersot supplements it thus: "D'autres témoignages, recueillis de divers côtés, sont unanimes à établir que cette personne était peu sympathique, et que Berlioz ne fut pas heureux avec elle" (*Hector Berlioz et la Société de son Temps*, p. 332). Edmond Hippeau, again, remarks in his *Berlioz intime* (1889): "Son esprit d'économie pouvait peut-être suffire à combler les vœux de Berlioz, mais elle ne laissait pas l'impression la plus favorable à ses amis. Ceux qui l'ont connue n'ont pas gardé de son caractère un souvenir bien flatteur"—appending Legouvé's account of the scandalous visit she paid the poor invalid Henriette, legitimate wife till death released her March 3, 1854.

sketches in Berlioz' letter to him of June '55,* each whereof, and more particularly this second one, depicts an image known to ophthalmologists as a symptom of pronounced astigmatism. Dr Gould now writes me that its occurrence in the said letter "would hardly have been possible if Berlioz had not seen these 'fortification spectra' in his own visual field." † Thus, i.e. by the nervous irritability resulting from constant but involuntary efforts at 'accommodation,' may be explained quite a number of those "asperities," common to both men, to which Berlioz himself confesses in the line that directly precedes his rough sketch; and if allowance must be made for *this* 'personal equation' in the one case, it must also be made in the other.

Clearly their London meeting was the most cordial and unconstrained of any of the few encounters between these suffering Titans; it will therefore be worth while to trace the steps that led to it on Berlioz' side.

By an odd coincidence, it is to Praeger that he sends his earliest note anent this London visit (Nov. 28, 54) ‡: "Mon cher Monsieur Praeger—Herewith my reply to M. le Doct. Wilde; please communicate it to him.—I am very sensible of all the interest you exhibit to me; believe in my sincere recognition.—Excuse me if I do not accept the friendly offer you make me, to lodge with you. My wife accompanies me. I am married again since a month.—A thousand compliments and thanks—Votre tout dévoué H. Berlioz." Dr Wylde, fellow-juror with Berlioz at the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, was plainly a friend of the Praegers also; for Wagner chaffs Madame, Nov. '55, with "Do you know Dr Wylde? Good! I am awaiting his invitation,

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* This I am in a position to attest, thanks to the courtesy of Dr Obrist, curator of the Liszt-museum at Weimar, who has kindly sent me a tracing of that portion of the Berlioz autograph.

† I enjoyed a hearty laugh, the other day, upon reading the would-be diagnosis of an amateur pathologist who ascribes to Berlioz a "dilated brain," evidently on the assumption that man's thinking organ is a bag; a diagnosis not much helped by this pronouncement, "the early prose of Berlioz indicates that he was a man of a cerebral structure that tended always to express itself extravagantly"—much as if one said, The onion is a bulb of a cellular structure that tends to emit a strong smell—and imagined one had been profound.

‡ A French document published by Mme Praeger in the *Musical Standard* of April 28, 1894.

to give him lessons in the 'music of the future'"; and Wagner had commenced his letter thus, "I am going to write to you in French . . . but I shall not be so absurd as to attempt to turn fine phrases. I must leave that to Dr Wylde, who doubtless understands it quite as well as music." From which it would appear the worthy Doctor was no fluent linguist, and we may therefore conclude that he had asked friend Ferdinand to draft and forward Berlioz' invitation for him. Berlioz' answer, on the other hand, shews that he had met Praeger in London or Paris already, and received attentions from him; by no means that the little man was prime originator (as he claims) of the brilliant notion of securing for two concerts of the present season a conductor who had inaugurated the New Philharmonic in 1852 with such eminent success. It is impossible to squeeze more than that from this formal letter, as Berlioz writes the Princess Wittgenstein next May: "If Liszt would care to send me a few lines in London, please let him address his letter to the office of Cramer & Beale, Regent-Street, London; I do not know as yet where I shall lodge"—not even a c/o Milton Street.

Originally Berlioz was meant to figure on the *early* programmes of this season, as he writes Liszt Jan. 1, 55: "The essential is for me to be enabled to get to London in March for the concerts of the New Philharmonic Society the direction of which has been confided to me, and to give *Roméo* and *Harold* there. Still, it is possible that I may get them to change the month in which my presence will be required in London." Probably the reason why he did eventually change the month had much to do with his *Te Deum* (p. 228*n*), but that change itself was responsible for the maimed rites of *Roméo*, as a portion of the band and chorus had entered other engagements meanwhile. Would it have been better or worse for Wagner's London prospects, had his French confrère come over in the month of his own début?—No: the Sphinx shall not tempt us again. It is of interest to note, however, that there is not a word either in this letter, or in another to Liszt of Jan. 10, to indicate that Berlioz had really been invited also by the Old society, as some of the London journals had insisted at the time. Another myth disposed of.

June 2, less than a week before starting, Berlioz writes Auguste Morel, "Wagner is succumbing to the attacks of the entire English press; but he remains calm, one hears, assured as he is

of being master of the musical world in another fifty years." How one is to interpret that remark, is not so clear; but there is nothing mightily effusive in the next, made to Liszt five days later (June 7): "I shall see Wagner when I get to London; they say he is in very bad humour. I will tell you what I find to be the truth about his position in England"—from which B. passes to his pet *bête noire*, Rossini. Here we also learn the date of Berlioz' departure from Paris: "Je pars demain matin pour Londres," i.e. Friday the 8th of June.

It must have been a full week after Berlioz' arrival, therefore within Wagner's last ten days in London, that the two men really met. For Liszt hears from Wagner (returned to Zurich): "I bring back one true gain from England, a sincere and heartfelt friendship formed for *Berlioz*, and mutually concluded by the pair of us. I had heard a concert of the New-philharmonic under his direction, and certainly was little edified by his rendering of Mozart's G minor symphony; whilst I had to pity him the execution of his Romeo and Juliet symphony, which was most inadequate [*vid. sup.*]. But we were *Sainton's* only guests at table a few days after; he [B.] was most animated, and the progress made in London with my French enabled me to debate all sorts of points in art, philosophy and life, with him for five hours on end.* Thereby I acquired a deep sympathy for my new-found friend. He changed to quite another man, in my eyes, from what he was before; of a sudden we found that we indeed were fellow-sufferers, and meseemed that I was—better off than Berlioz." As the very next sentence speaks of a later meeting, at which "his wife was present," there is more in that "*allein*" than leaps to the eye; but on that aspect we have dwelt already. In a different direction, too, "allein" has its significance:—

Our never-palling *As* thus follows up its mention of the 7th Old Philharmonic concert (the Queen-graced one—at which P.'s presence, by the way, was *missed* by Davison; p. 316 *sup.*): "That

* June 17 would therefore be the pretty certain date of this historic dinner, Sunday being the only day in the week when French host and guest could have escaped that "tourbillon de Londres" which Berlioz tells Liszt, *next* Sunday, "a tourné vite pour moi cette année." It is curious to compare this supposition with the dates of those three repudiations, 16th to 18th of the month: Wagner must have been left in blissful ignorance of them.

evening after the concert our usual meeting included Berlioz and his wife. Berlioz had arrived shortly before this concert. Between him and Wagner I knew an awkward constraint existed, which I hardly saw how to bridge over, but I was desirous to bring the two together, and discussing the matter with Wagner, he agreed that perhaps the convivial union after the concert afforded the very opportunity. And so Berlioz came. But his wife was sickly; she lay on the sofa and engrossed the whole of her husband's attention, causing Berlioz to leave somewhat early. He came alone to the next gathering." Very circumstantial. *As* adds a detail—possibly true of some other occasion: "Wagner went to the piano, and sang the 'Star of Eve,' with harmonies which Chellard, a German composer of little note * (he had composed 'Macbeth' as an opera), said 'must be intended.' The effect was extremely mirth-provoking, for Wagner could ape the ridiculous with irresistible humour." Not content with that, *Wie* adds: "This joke of our honoured master, most amusing to ourselves, much displeased Mme Berlioz [why?!] and the married couple left us, though not without a sign from Berlioz himself that he was very loth to go away" etc. *Wie* had gone farther than that, though, in its luckless circumstantiality: "Berlioz attended the concert [7th]. As I stood on very friendly terms with him, and knew [etc., see *As*] . . I invited Berlioz and his wife to our merry nocturnal reunion, together with Wagner . . . Berlioz readily complied with my invitation; but his visit lasted only a brief time, as his wife, who was very ailing, had to lie on the sofa all the time, and also called him almost every instant from our midst, almost as if she did it on purpose to obviate a rapprochement, for she quite plainly shewed she did not like the company [delicious!]. First she would ask for her smelling-salts, then for a drink of water; when brought her, however, she would not touch it. Berlioz was dragged so to and fro by her, that he seems to

* A thorough Frenchman, born in Paris 1789, Hummel's successor as Weimar Kapellmeister, subsequently ousted by Liszt (see iii, 218 and iv, 248*n*). A couple of lines in Berlioz' letter of June 7 afford the key to this Chinese puzzle: "In my feuilleton [*Débats*] of tomorrow, Friday, you will find a series of portraits (les astucci) which I have just been compelled to retouch, to render them less faithful. There you will recognise the great Capell-Meister whom *you replace* down there (as he puts it)." Anyone acquainted with the Praegerian method can apply the key for himself.

have seen at last it was a mere matter of the caprices of a somewhat over-pampered Parisienne; wherefore he proposed to come alone to us next time." Of whatever night P. may be speaking, it was the other way round, since Mme Berlioz did accompany her spouse "the next time"—tho' not according to 'the books' of P. From all his muddle, notwithstanding, one grain of truth is to be winnowed out: that *opposition sourde* of Mme Berlioz is quite in harmony with Bülow's tale of Marie Recio's spite a year before.

Praeger is particularly unkind to us Britons in this connection; he squanders on his ingrate natives a long account denied to our long-suffering selves. Two pages later, with winsome disregard of *sequitur*, *Wie* endows them with the following corollary: "It was not without interest for me, to watch Berlioz. We were immensely intimate ["höchst intim"—the *comble* of all P.'s "intimacies"], and yet I never put a bridle on my veneration for Wagner's genius when I spoke to him about Wagner, and I almost believe this fearless love of truth imposed on him ["ihm imponirte"—forgive my chuckling]. For at the same time Berlioz knew I paid him all the admiration to which he had a perfect right [honest of you]; he also knew with what enthusiasm I had received him on his first visit to London [red baize on the door-step?], and to what trouble I had put myself for his sake [an earlier martyrdom, S. Ferdinand?], and it speaks well for him that, in spite of my intimate relations with Wagner [not "höchst"?], he was never cross about it; for even a little while before his death he wrote to me most confidentially! Yet these two, Wagner and he, never came together without repelling each other again"—

Enough of the *fades Geschwätz!* It is all knocked on the head by the unfortunate fact that Berlioz himself writes Liszt June 24, "A fatality seems to prevent my hearing anything of Wagner's later compositions! The day he conducted his overture to *Tannhäuser* at Hanover Square-Room on the demand of Prince Albert"—the very concert which P. (his own presence questioned by Davison) says B. attended, and on to which he tacks his tale —"I was compelled to preside over an atrocious rehearsal, at the same hour, of the choruses for the concert of the New Philharmonic which I was to conduct two days thereafter. It was a matter of the choruses in the first 4 parts of Roméo, and went so prodigiously execrably that I was obliged—despite the wish of

Dr Wilde, who thought it all remarkably well sung—to cut these horrors short by suppressing the voice entirely." *

Needless to say, Berlioz never mentions Praeger in his published letters, nor does Wagner refer to him at all in this regard; P.'s mediating services are pure imagination, just as his whole tale is hopeless involution. In corroboration of which statement, allow me to quote once more from my letter to the *M. Standard* of May 19, 1894: "I took the opportunity, a few days ago, of visiting an old friend of Sainton's, a French gentleman who has lived in London since 1860 [a M. Dulcide Rocques, known here as de Fontanier, and since deceased], and of asking him what he knew of Sainton in relation to Wagner . . . This gentleman volunteered the information that Sainton had told him over and over again that *he* made it his special effort, in 1855, to bring Berlioz and Wagner together, and that their first meeting was at a dinner *à quatre* in his own (S.'s) house, *Lüders* being the

* Which led to a little heated correspondence in the *M. World* of June 23, a "Member of the Chorus" (amateur?) objecting that, "after attending six rehearsals and having learnt the music by heart," their services "were so unceremoniously dispensed with"; whilst a professional chorus-singer complains that no professionals were engaged at all, and "the amateurs could not sing the music at [the last] rehearsal," whereupon the unmannerly amateurs, in "their places in the orchestra on the concert night . . . on M. Berlioz entering the orchestra for the second part, they *hissed* him. The *one* great musician of the day can afford to laugh at the insult; but I trust, should this meet his eye, that he will believe none of the professional chorus of 1852 were guilty of such conduct." Berlioz himself replies at half a column's length (small type) on the front page of the *M. Wd* for June 30; a dignified letter worth reprinting in full. Its gist is contained in the following: "Au dernier moment, M. Gassier, dont la voix est celle de baryton, a déclaré qu'il ne pouvait chanter un rôle de ténor, et que Mdme. Gassier (soprano aigu) ne pouvait chanter un rôle de contralto; ce qui, pour moi, était évident. . . . Quant au chant des Capulets, pour lequel MM. les choristes hommes s'étaient donné beaucoup de peine, il était bien su. Mais en apprenant qu'on avait maintenant l'habitude de faire exécuter les chœurs devant le public *sans que les choristes eussent une seule fois* répété avec l'orchestre, j'ai éprouvé une vive inquiétude. D'autant plus qu'un petit nombre de ces messieurs étant venus à la dernière répétition, et ayant deux fois de suite manqué leur entrée après la replique de l'orchestre, il était évident que ceux qui devaient chanter au concert, sans avoir jamais entendu l'orchestre (c'est à dire le grand nombre), manqueraient leur entrée à coup sur. Pouvais-je les exposer à un aussi fâcheux accident? Pouvais-je exposer la Société Philharmonique à un désastre de cette gravité? Et pouvais-je m'exposer moi-même à voir un des morceaux principaux de mon ouvrage compromis dans une tentative pareille?" etc.

fourth person . . . I cross-questioned this French gentleman pretty heavily on the point, and his replies were always to the same effect: 'Sainton told me of this little dinner over and over again, and that poor Lüders was practically out in the cold owing to the animated conversation between the two big men, for Wagner had by that time considerably refreshed his French through constant intercourse with Sainton; this was the *first* meeting of Wagner and Berlioz in London.' This gentleman also knew the late Mr Praeger, and had read *Wagner as I knew him*, about which he made some pretty severe comments."

Wagner's shyness of thrusting himself on anyone's society is proverbial, and it is easy to understand that, though present at the New Philh. concert of the 13th June, he would not force a path for himself among the enthusiasts who thronged round Berlioz at its close; particularly as there was little congratulation to be offered on the rendering of the selection from *Roméo*, if we may believe not only Wagner, but his foeman Davison. Berlioz himself remarks in that same letter to Liszt: "In spite of a few *absences réelles* in the orchestra, the first two pieces of Roméo went well. The Fête, in fact, was rendered with such verve that, for the first time since the existence of this symphony, it was *bissée à grand Hurra* by the whole vast audience in Exeter-Hall. There were many faults in the Scherzo."

What this letter tells Liszt about Wagner is more to our purpose: "We have talked much of you these last few days with Wagner, and you may imagine with what affection; for, upon my word I believe that he loves you as much as I love you myself. No doubt he will tell you all about his stay in London, and what he has had to endure from *une hostilité de parti-pris*. He is superb of ardour, warmth of heart, and I avow, his very violences transport me. A fatality seems [etc., *vid. sup.*]. . . . Wagner finishes with Hanover Square tomorrow, Monday, and will hasten off next day. We are to dine together [where?] before the concert. He has something singularly attractive about him, and if we each have our asperities, at least our asperities dovetail in" (*s'emboîtent*). Berlioz passes on to Meyerbeer (*not* cordially, *vid. inf.*), thence to a visit to Champion Hill, where Klindworth, himself, a young German painter, and the two daughters of the house, have just been singing "des morceaux à 5 voix de Purcell," which "these ladies seem to know as well as their Bible, but

which charmed Klindworth and myself only moderately. The others drank it in like holy milk"—quite a pendant to Wagner's Camberwell. Which brings us back to our hero:—

"There really is a musical feeling at bottom of these English natures; but it is a conservative feeling, religious before all else, and anti-passionate. Wagner has done for himself in the public mind of London through appearing to set small store by Mendelssohn [eternal token of Dreisterner's folly]. Mendelssohn, you see, is a Händel and a half to many people!!! From another side, if I hadn't the same failing myself toward other masters, whom I execrate with all the violence of a 120-ton gun, I should say Wagner does wrong not to consider the puritan Mendelssohn a rich and fine individuality. When a master is a master, and when that master has always honoured and respected art *partout* [did M. "everywhere"?], one ought to honour and respect him also [did W. not?], whatever may be the divergence existing between the line we follow and that which he has followed. Wagner might turn the argument against myself, if he knew whom I abominate so cordially; but I shall take good care not to tell him. Whenever I hear or read certain pieces of this big master's [BACH—says M. Tiersot] I simply clench my teeth till I get home, and there, alone, relieve myself by heaping him with imprecations.—One is not perfect."

A splendid hater; one almost loves him for his candour. But we must now bid Au revoir to Berlioz, and all of them, till after the 8th Philharmonic. Last programme, June 25:—

Part I.

Sinfonia in C minor (No. 3)	Spohr.
Scena, "Wie nahte mir der Schlummer" (Freischütz), Mdlle Emilie Krall of Vienna . .	Weber.
Concerto in A flat, pfte, Herr Pauer . . .	Hummel.
Song, "The Spirit Song," Miss Dolby . .	Haydn.
Overture, "Midsummer Night's Dream" . .	Mendelssohn.

Part II.

Sinfonia in B flat (No. 4)	Beethoven.
Duetto, "Della Mosa" (Le Prophète), Mdlle Krall and Miss Dolby	Meyerbeer.
Overture, "Oberon"	Weber.

In vain do we still look for repetition of the *Lohengrin* prelude

and entr'acte; yet the semi-official reporter shall be our first to quote, *Daily News* June 28, as shewing that Wagner and his dull employers said goodbye at least politely :—

The close of the Philharmonic concerts is a sign of the approaching termination of the season. Tuesday night's concert [this slip *must* be the editor's—see also "last night," *inf.*] was the last and we are inclined to think the best of this year's series. [*Programme.*]

It is because this concert was the best [?], that it affords less room for remarks than any preceding concert of this season. Every piece, instrumental and vocal, in the above programme is well known to the musical public. Every one of them is a masterpiece of its kind, and its merits cannot be made a subject of question or criticism; and the manner in which every one of them was received by the audience was a sufficient proof of the way in which it was performed. The two great symphonies of Spohr and Beethoven, which formed the principal features of the concert, were played in a style which reflected the highest honour both on the conductor and on the orchestra. The time of every movement was taken with perfect judgment; where it differed—as in the introductory adagio, and in the finale of Beethoven's symphony—from the mode to which we have been accustomed at these concerts, the difference was justified by the excellence of the effect. Hummel's Concerto in A flat seems to be Herr Pauer's *cheval de bataille.* We have heard him play it of late more than once, but never so successfully as last night; and this success of last night we ascribe, in addition to his own fine performance, to the excellent quality of Broadwood's magnificent instrument, and the very great care and delicacy with which he was accompanied by the orchestra.

The vocal music was admirable. Mdlle Krall, a stranger at these concerts, gained a triumph by her performance of the great scena in the *Freischütz.* We have never heard it sung with a more beautiful voice, more brilliant execution, or stronger dramatic meaning. This young Viennese lady is an artiste of the first order. Haydn's "Spirit Song," one of those beautiful songs which he wrote to English poetry while he was in this country, is a thing which Miss Dolby has made her own by the deep pathos with which she sings it. It is impossible to listen to it unmoved. The original accompaniment for the pianoforte has been arranged for the orchestra by Mr Henry Leslie with great skill and the happiest effect. The quaint little duet from the Prophète requires the stage; but the fair singers rendered it as effective as it can be made in a concert-room.

At the end of the concert, Herr Wagner was greeted, before leaving the orchestra, with loud and general applause, which was most justly his due. Whatever differences of opinion may exist among our critics

as to the peculiarities of his style as a composer, there can be no question as to his genius and attainments, or to his high position among the musicians of the age.

Friendly as all the above may appear, I cannot help feeling that it is rather a case of 'standing up for one's man,' a final demonstration in favour of one's own lost cause, than anything else; not a word of hope is expressed in it, that Wagner may be induced to return for another season. Neither is there in the same writer's brief *Illustrated* report of the 30th—which does not mention Wagner's name, though it ends with, "The performance of these fine pieces was as admirable as their selection was judicious, and the whole concert was received with every mark of cordial approbation"—nor in his *John Bull* account of even date: "The character of Herr Wagner, the celebrated musician who was brought from Germany to conduct the concerts of this season, has given rise to difference of opinion and to a good deal of severe (and as we think) unmerited criticism. But the general and prolonged applause with which he was greeted on Monday evening, when he made his parting bow on leaving the orchestra, showed that his exertions, in the fulfilment of an arduous duty, have given general satisfaction to the public." Similarly in the *Spectator*, also of the 30th June: "The performances were warmly applauded, and when Herr Wagner made his parting bow for the orchestra, the cordial greeting he received from every part of the room showed that, notwithstanding the hostile criticism, from several quarters, of which he has been the subject, he has acquitted himself of his arduous and responsible duties to the general satisfaction of the public." Had the Directors wanted Wagner back—subject, of course, to their own prospective re-election—some little hint to that effect would surely have been dropped in one at least of these four valedictions by their secretary. They did not want him—as may be gathered with great certainty from the book which Hogarth published seven years after, to be cited in our closing chapter.

Terrible was James Davison's alarm, however, when faced with the mere ghost of such a possibility a few weeks later. Since Wagner's departure the *M. World* had wasted no more ink upon his sycophant, so that we are robbed of Dreisterner's raptures over the fifth to seventh concerts; but an agony of fear resuscitates the bugbear August 11:—

The late directors of the Old Philharmonic Society are incorrigible. Can you believe, reader, that, without any power either to offer or to make engagements, they absolutely proposed, at the termination of the disastrously memorable season of 1855, to renew that of Herr Richard Wagner for next year? Our authority is Professor Praeger, of Hamm—*chef de claque* in England for the "Drama of the Future"—who thus writes to the *New York Musical Review*, which he supplies with such trustworthy information, from week to week, and which is indebted to his pen for the records of the Wagnerian triumphs in this country:—

> "We are, however, glad to notice that the influence of this would-be-autocrat-critic [F. Davison] is far less than one would believe—or than he would *make* the uninitiated believe; and no stronger evidence was wanting for this than the decided genuine and hearty reception which greeted Richard Wagner on his *entrée* in the orchestra at the eighth and last concert of the Old Philharmonic Society, on Monday, the 25th June—the intensity of which was only exceeded by the leave-taking after the concert, for which an unusually numerous public remained purposely, against their usual habit of running and rushing out in the middle of the last overture—which was the strongest proof that possibly could be given, that all the silly twaddle and musical 'bosh' of the critic had not influenced any of the subscribers—always excepting the small (not elegant) clique of self-elected native geniuses. Even the orchestra—which may be called Signor Costa's orchestra, and notwithstanding his presence—gave repeated hearty bursts of applause. *Wagner, however, has refused already—a fact which we can prove, black upon white—another engagement for next year* [italics clearly Davison's], as well as one in Germany, at one of the courts which, in offering the engagement, expressed its indifference as to his position as an exile."

Now, if this be true, and there is no other evidence against its truth than the testimony of the Hamm Professor (which is "rayther" suspicious), the late directors should be arraigned by the Society for assuming responsibilities, which, according to its laws, were not vested in them. When the term of office has ended, the seven directors (who are re-elected annually, at the general meeting) possess no more authority than any of the rest of the forty members. Their power only extends to the season of their direction; and they have no right whatever to meddle by anticipation with the management of future directorates, of which, so far as they are aware, not one of them may constitute a part [as a fact, three out of the seven, including all-dominant Anderson, were re-elected—see cap. II.].

This matter imperatively demands an explanation. *Was* a fresh engagement proposed to Herr Richard Wagner?—or is the whole a pure fiction, an invention of Dreisterner, who is so fertile in manufacturing facts to suit his own ends! Here is something for the

"special committee" to inquire into—if they really mean (which we doubt) to inquire into anything.

Dear Davison, your fears are groundless, you have been caught for once in Dreisterner's transparent trap: the simple man had never said this "another engagement" was offered by *the same* society. Of course he must, or should have meant the New Philharmonic (*vid. inf.*), tho' it certainly was "rayther suspicious" of him to couple it with that bunkum about a German court's having "expressed its indifference as to [Wagner's] position as an exile." Not a word of such princely "indifference" is to be found in any of Wagner's contemporary letters. Had there been a particle of truth in it, naturally he would have discussed it in his next to Liszt, of July 5, whence we derive his own account of the final Philharmonic:—

"At the last concert"—Wagner continues after his tribute to the Queen and Prince Consort for disregarding his political outlawry— "both audience and orchestra bestirred themselves to a similar demonstration against the London critics. Often enough had I been told my hearers were very well disposed towards me, whilst the band I had always found anxious to comply with my intentions as far as bad habits and want of time allowed: yet of the former I observed that they were slow at picking up impressions, and knew not how to distinguish true from false, trivial pedantry from solid worth; whereas the latter had always been constrained to the least compromising modicum of outward applause of me by regard for its true lord and despot, Costa—who can discharge and appoint his bandsmen at will [Roy. Ital. Op.]. This time, however—at the leave-taking—the barrier broke down; the orchestra rose to its feet, and with the whole packed roomful burst into so continuous a fire of claps that I really felt embarrassed by its show of never ceasing. Then the whole band crowded round me for a farewell hand-shake, and hands were even stretched to me at last by gentlemen and ladies from the audience, all which I duly had to squeeze.—So this London expedition, preposterous enough at bottom, assumed the nature of a triumph for me in the end, and at least I was rejoiced to see the stand the public made against the critics this time.*

* Cf. to L. Schindelmeisser, July 30: "At the end my band and audience offered me a splendid demonstration against a press I had not paid; which really touched me."

That there has been no sort of triumph in *my* sense, goes without saying. In the best event I could have struck no full acquaintance with anybody, in the concert-room ; that best event—performances completely answering to my intentions—I found impossible of achievement, and principally through lack of time."—

Who wrote the report for the *N. Zeitschrift* of July 20, 55, I wonder? Among flowers of speech of all kinds, "Adepts," "High Priests," "electric streams" and so on, it tells us, "Not content with this demonstration, the orchestra seized Wagner and raised him on its shoulders, just as Roman soldiers once paid homage to a new Imperator." Somebody at Weimar probably, for, notwithstanding the German style is bad enough, its perpetrator can scarcely have been our Parallax, who waxes quite indignant at this rival jongleur in his letter of November (*N. Z.* Jan. '56): "Though there is not a word of truth in the silly tale of shouldering Wagner, with which someone not present at the concert has duped you, there was something really moving in the general emotion, and even the aforesaid little clique kept still and bit its tongue."

Those tongue-biters shall have their turn in time, but Davison was not among them—he thrust his out, metaphorically of course, in the *Times* of the very next morning (June 26). Mr Davison, will you oblige again?—we are all attention. Thank you :—

The eighth concert, last night, brought to a close one of the most unprosperous seasons in the annals of the Philharmonic Society [*Programme*]. Spohr's Third Symphony . . is by no means one of his most brilliant efforts. . . . The bright and happy inspiration of Beethoven, which needs no description, formed a grateful contrast. Neither symphony was well played ; but, amid the coarseness which marked the execution of both, that of Spohr came off better than its companion. On the whole it was scarcely possible for a symphony so well known as Beethoven's in B flat to go worse. The *minuetto* was positively disgraceful. The overture of Mendelssohn, another work equally familiar, was almost as bad.* The band was either

* Davison was touchy about *anybody's* rendering of Mendelssohn ; see his criticism of Costa, *M. Wd* May '54 : "The overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* needs neither description nor praise. The execution, however, though delicate in the fairy passages, was not satisfactory. The time generally was too slow, and the many unwarranted changes, alternately to quicker and slower, gave a disjointed effect to the *ensemble*." The archangel (as one used to hear him called) as a 'new reader,' is quite alarming !

shamefully negligent, or unable to understand the conductor; it matters little which, since neither admitted of excuse at the Philharmonic Concerts.

Had the overture to *Oberon* been practicable at the speed at which it was taken, it might possibly have sounded very imposing, but it was *not* practicable; the stringed instruments, unable to play the rapid passages distinctly, were lost in the clamour of the brass, and the effect was much more furious than satisfactory. Herr Pauer performed the piano part in Hummel's graceful concerto as well as could be wished; but here again the orchestra was so unsteady that the pianist, though a thoroughly practised hand, was more than once perplexed. The accompaniments to the vocal music went much in the same manner, but they could not prevent Mademoiselle Emilie Krall—who only wants the art of restraining her enthusiasm, to become a singer—from making a decided impression in the finest of Weber's dramatic scenas, and in the charming duet from the *Prophète* ("Della Mosa") with Miss Dolby. The latter sang finely; but surely her répertoire is not limited to such an extent as to warrant her in coming so often before the public with Haydn's melancholy "spirit song."

The engagement of Herr Wagner has not proved fortunate. No foreign conductor ever invited to England came with such extraordinary pretensions and produced so unfavourable an impression. We should not quarrel with Herr Wagner's "new readings," although we agree with few of them, if he could render them intelligible to his orchestra. But this he has failed to do, and the result has been a series of performances unparalleled for inefficiency. The fact is, that the author of *Lohengrin* knows better how to theorize fancifully than to reduce his theories to practice. His conducting shows as great a lack of the requisite science as his music; and, for one who has talked so largely in print—arraigning the whole host of musical composers, as Bacon did the philosophers and schoolmen, and setting up a standard of excellence that none of them, according to his idea, have approached—Herr Wagner, it must be confessed, has cut but a sorry figure in this country, where plain common sense goes for something, and a man is rather judged by his deeds than his professions. Herr Wagner's musical Utopia may be desirable; but if he is really anxious to recommend it to the world, he should confine himself to the lecture room, and leave to others the task of practical illustration. We believe him to be a very clever man, one of the most subtle and specious, indeed, of the race of modern German system-makers; but his works present irrefutable proofs that his organization is *not* musical, and a musician, like a poet, is born, not made.

Meanwhile, the discontent created by the arrangements for the season just expired should keep the Philharmonic members on the alert. Another such a set of eight concerts would go far to annihilate

the society. At the approaching general meeting we understand the actual state of affairs will be taken into consideration. It is to be hoped this may be true, and that the discussion will be independent of all special influences. It would be a pity to see such an institution as the Philharmonic Society—which, with all its failings and narrow-minded policy, has done much good for art—go helplessly to the wall; but nothing less than searching and stringent reform can avert a catastrophe which would be unanimously regretted. There is still time to "turn over a new leaf," however, if only that time be used to good purpose.

Why this sudden access of truculence, one cannot help asking, after Davison had shewn himself quite eulogistic in parts of each of his two preceding reports? Again the answer must be sought in the columns of the *Musical World*, though this time it is rather Wagner who had dealt himself the *coup de grace*. True, the editor had been exasperated once again by Parallax, with those fizzling fatuities recorded p. 265 *sup.*, and thus wound up a leader in his issue of June 23: "As a pendant to the monstrous adulation of Herr Wagner we find a series of calumnious insinuations directed against ourselves. We can afford, however, to laugh at them, and allow the Hammish locust to spout his froth, like a whale pierced with numberless harpoons, in the last throes of agony. Having harpooned the Professor, we are quite disposed to lend a compassionate ear to his dying protest, although at our own expense." Those "calumnious insinuations"—which we may take on trust, after other specimens—no doubt had some contributory influence on the Rhadamanthine sentence passed above; but there is a clause in the verdict, viz. "arraigning the whole host of musical composers," which points to the head and front of Wagner's offending in the eyes of most opera-frequenters of the last mid-century. In *Opera and Drama*, after bantering Rossini, he had condemned great Meyerbeer to outer darkness.

Says Tiersot in his *Hector Berlioz:* "Wagner was one of the first to see clear. The rôle of Meyerbeer is admirably defined in his *Opéra et drame*. . . . Facts will shew that his subtle observations hereon have been justified at all points"; and from the heart of that Paris, whence Meyerbeer then ruled the operatic world, we hear to-day, "The credit of Meyerbeer is exhausted. *Les Huguenots* still maintains itself on the répertoire, as much by the force of custom as for the real beauty of a scene in whose conception the whole spirit of Romanticism had co-operated"—the scene

which Wagner characterised, himself, as "one of the most perfect of Music's works" (*P.* II. 101)—"but a recent reprise of *l'Africaine* has revealed that the gloaming of this art is still more sombre than one would have believed, and one does not even dare to produce *Robert le Diable* any longer." Fifty years make a vast difference in perspective, and it was considered almost blasphemy in Paris, Berlin, or London,* half a century ago, to touch one hair of "the illustrious Meyerbeer." Now, Wagner had tugged at each lock of that sacred chevelure most vigorously, and in the very chapter of *Opera and Drama* whose turn came for unauthorised appearance in the *M. World* of June 23, two days before the final Philharmonic. Still worse an omen: Giacomo himself had just arrived in London—a gathering of the eagles, indeed. It needed nothing so coarse as a bribe; the spirit of opposition working on a Scotsman's blood, perhaps helped by an apt moan of "ingratitude," would quite suffice. Three pages after Wagner's fulmination, the first leader in that issue of June 23 sounds the call of the man in possession:—

For the first time during three-and-twenty years, Meyerbeer has been induced to visit England, where his works have rendered his name famous for more than a quarter of a century. The composer of *Il Crociato in Egitto*, *Robert le Diable*, *Les Huguenots*, *Le Prophète*, *L'Etoile du Nord*, and so many other remarkable productions, arrived in London on Tuesday afternoon [one week before Wagner's departure], and witnessed, in the evening, the performance of Verdi's *Trovatore* at the Royal Italian Opera.

Meyerbeer has doubtless come to superintend the rehearsals of his last great opera, upon the success of which at Covent Garden so much depends. He will find in Mr Costa all that a sensitive composer could possibly desire from a musical director. The same zeal, the same gentlemanly attentions which the popular *chef d'orchestre* lavished upon Dr Spohr, will, we are sure, be equally at the disposal of Meyerbeer. The principal singers, the members of the band and chorus, in short, the whole *personnel* of the Royal Italian Opera, from

* How seldom any work of Meyerbeer's is given in London now, is matter of too common knowledge to need statistics. As for Germany, in the yearly summary of performances on *all* the countless operatic stages there for the twelvemonth ending Aug. 31, 1905, we find the *Huguenots* credited with 88—one less than *Götterdämmerung*, one more than Halévy's *Juive*—whilst *Lohengrin* and *Carmen* tie with 341! In a slightly later table, for the whole of 1905 I find 212 representations set down to Meyerbeer in all—against 1642 to Wagner.

the manager to the scene-shifter, will hail the advent of the celebrated musician with enthusiasm, and do everything in their power to render his sojourn in this metropolis agreeable enough to tempt him here again when the long-expected *Africaine* shall be immediately on the *tapis*.* And, after all, the reception Meyerbeer is sure to experience is but a just return for the services he has indirectly conferred on the establishment. How many thousands upon thousands of pounds sterling have the *Huguenots* and the *Prophète* caused to flow into the Covent Garden treasury in the course of seven or eight years! And how many salaries, to rich and poor, have been paid through the medium of their attraction! These matters cannot be overlooked. They have nothing to do with the esteem which inevitably attaches to the composer of some of the most extraordinary operas that have enriched the modern lyric stage. That is a question apart—a question for musicians and amateurs who have been charmed by the music of the master, and for the theatrical public at large, who are not likely to be behind-hand in testifying their respect for one to whom they are indebted for so much gratification and amusement.

When Meyerbeer was last in England (in 1832), he came to preside over the rehearsals of his *Robert le Diable*, on the occasion of that celebrated opera being produced, by Mr Monck Mason, at Her Majesty's Theatre. . . . The year 1832 was further memorable for the first visit to this country of Meyerbeer's great compatriot, Mendelssohn Bartholdy.† What things have occurred since then! *St. Paul* and *Elijah* written, and their gifted composer departed to a place "where only his music can be excelled" . . . . the follies of Liszt, and the opposition by Richard Wagner, with "the books;"—— —— but we could go on for ever; all these, which we have named pell-mell, and a hundred other things we shall not name at all, have passed before us, like the vision of the kings before Macbeth. Meanwhile the fame of Meyerbeer has risen step by step to its present eminence. His coming among us, after so long an absence, to find boys men, and men dotards, the face of the city changed, and his own name spread out from a point into a sun, is "an event," both for Meyerbeer and for all of us who regard music as a great fact, and its best representatives as worthy to be honoured.

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* Not completed till shortly before his death in 1864, nor produced till a year thereafter, first in Paris, then in London; now dead itself.

† An extraordinary slip to be made by a Bartholater! In 1832 Mendelssohn's visit was merely to London—with two performances of his G minor Concerto at Philh. concerts, and the rendering of his *Hebrides* overture at another—whereas in 1829 he made a prolonged tour in England and Scotland and conducted his C minor symphony at the Philharmonic.

Quite the tribute one would have expected to be paid, in any case, to a *maestro* whose "most extraordinary operas"—a somewhat ambiguous term—had "caused thousands upon thousands of pounds to flow into the treasury of Covent Garden." And if, on Meyerbeer's departure, Davison sings him a full pæan of praise (*M. Wd* July 28), why should he not have fallen victim to the tinsel fascinations of an opera which "has already made a conquest of the public, and its vogue increases nightly" (report on the performance of July 26, the fourth)? D. had never *heard* either *Lohengrin* or *Tannhäuser*, mind you. But—and there is a little but in it—that "opposition by Richard Wagner, with 'the books,'" looks threatening, with Meyerbeer himself so close at hand; and by the time we reach June 30, the issue following the final Philharmonic, the storm-clouds of the *Musical World* discharge a perfect torrent of abuse on Meyerbeer's dread rival. "Richard Wagner has departed," begins a foaming leader of six columns, the text whereof I reproduce in my Appendix; nor is that all, for three full columns of small type, directed at the Philharmonic, reduce the season past to wreckage. For the moment I will only cite from these the bolt that strikes the final concert:—

How comes it, specially, that all the music of the last concert (except the C minor symphony of Spohr, which, though less familiar than all the rest, alone went respectably well)—being so thoroughly well known as to be scarcely in a more than A, B, C condition of difficulty, sounded little better than though the band were rehearsing it for the first time? How comes it that Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream" overture was all at sixes and sevens throughout?—that poor Herr Pauer was accompanied so wildly in that very simple and straightforward concerto of Hummel?—that Mdlle Krall, with all her energy of voice, could not urge forward that lazy orchestra to anything like the times she must have known and felt Weber intended for the various movements of his *scena?*—that Beethoven's B flat symphony was played so generally ill, and that where the *scherzo* re-enters after the trio, a catastrophe, fatal to the renown of the orchestra—to say nothing of the feelings of the audience—was only just averted by the decision of the performers themselves? that in the overture to *Oberon*, the giant stringed-band of the Philharmonic Society became, for the first time, all but voiceless for the utterance of passages, and sank murmuring among the general roar of the mass? There can be but one answer; and that points to the incompetence of the conductor. The Pundit-Praeger of Hamm may say what pleases him

may hurl all "the books," and as many more as he sees fitting, at our heads, and may swagger in all the Trans-atlantic papers that unluckily admit his correspondence about prejudices, foregone conclusions, and anything else that suits his purpose; but facts are too potent to be overturned by mere talk. Last season the performances were generally admirable, this season they have been as generally the reverse. Nothing has been changed except the conductor, and to what, then, except this change, can the falling-off be attributable?

To exhaust the original paragraph, we have had to accompany Davison a little distance from the "special" to the general, but must defer consideration of the latter till we reach our clearing-house, cap. VII. In that department will also be found the general verdict of one representative of Native Talent, the critic of the *Morning Post*, who no longer deigns to go into particulars; the other, Smart, conveniently divides his final diatribe (*Sunday Times* July 1) into two water-tight sections, the first whereof may figure here with immaterial omissions, beginning at the merits of Spohr's symphony:—

. . . The *larghetto* also, on this occasion, with true Wagnerian consistency, drawled down to the slowest of *adagios*—is a lovely movement, and produced, as it invariably does, a great effect in performance; but for the limping pace at which it was taken, it would certainly have received an encore. . . . The C minor symphony [Spohr's] was very well executed, and in this respect, of all the items of the concert, it stood alone. Mendelssohn's overture . . went disgracefully. The execution was, throughout, coarse and most undream-like; from first to last there were but a few occasional places where the instruments could be said to be passably together; and there was a fine sprinkling of such slips and omissions as this fine band could not have been guilty of under any competent direction. Neither is Beethoven's B flat symphony so strange to the Philharmonic executants, or so difficult, that it should receive the treatment it experienced at this concert . . [Practically same comments as Davison's] . .

The overture to *Oberon*—again a very familiar composition to the London orchestras—can be said to have received less a performance than a dashing, smudgy sketch of its general effect. Its *allegro* was taken—after Herr Wagner's manner—at so terrific a pace that the simple delivery of its notes became impossible; or, if in any degree played, over-rapidity so completely asserted its usual destructive influence on tone, that, magnificent in force as is the Philharmonic string-band, the fiddle passages became wholly obliterated in the general mass of sound. After the established Wagnerian custom also, the *cantabile* phrases of this overture were dragged down to nearly one-half of the

initial rate of speed—the effect, so far from suggesting anything elegant or impressive in the way of style, being simply that the orchestra was playing very unreasonably and absurdly out of time. As in several other instances this season, there can be no mistake about matters of "reading" touching the overture to *Oberon*. It would be difficult, indeed, to show that a composer is not the fittest judge of the time and manner in which his own music should be performed; and this being conceded, the unavoidable *sequitur* is, that Herr Wagner is entirely in error. We have heard this overture, under Weber's personal direction,* at least twenty times, and can positively affirm, that the version perpetrated on Monday evening scarcely more resembled that of the composer himself, than does the music of the "future" emulate that of the great past.

The instrumental solo of the evening . . . was very indifferently accompanied throughout. The usual conditions of these things were reversed; the soloist had to wait on the orchestra—not the orchestra on the soloist . . [On the vocalists] . . As we presume the times of the various portions of the Der Freischütz scena were not of her dictation, we can scarcely hold Madlle Krall responsible for its effect or, rather want of it, at this concert. The *cantabile* immediately after the first recitative, was taken fully one half slower than we should have supposed ordinary patience or a singer's breath could tolerate; and although, during the after part of the song, Madlle Krall appeared desirous enough to push forward the time into something more of warmth and spirit, her compatriot, the conductor, was manifestly resolute that her wish should not be gratified. . . .

Bias and exaggeration are manifest in both these reports (so at variance with Hogarth's criticisms), but can they have had a substratum of truth? It will be observed that the first piece on the programme is said to have been "very well executed" on the whole, but that "in this respect it stood alone." When we learn that about six hours after the concert's conclusion Wagner started on his homeward road, we may guess he had been packing and settling up all day, and arrived at Hanover Square dead-beat—not to mention his preoccupation with the release of to-morrow. With nerves a-tingle, as his mostly were, it was madness to think of rushing a departure like that, if he wished to leave a

* H. Smart himself was aged but 12½ years, then, so that his recollections of *tempi* etc. can scarcely count for much, just as his "at least twenty times" must be reduced to the 12 for which Weber had contracted (see *Grove*) unless we throw in a couple of rehearsals. Once again, how extraordinary it is that no one should have told the Smarts of Wagner's loving exertions in the matter of their whilom guest's re-burial!

good impression in his wake. Beethoven's Fourth symphony, Weber's and Mendelssohn's overtures, were perfectly familiar to him: he had conducted the first at Zurich only eighteen months before, and the second and third repeatedly at Dresden (vol. ii); so that all the larger works save the "well-executed" one were old friends of his, and nothing but fatigue or absent-mindedness could possibly account for a "perilous approach to an absolute break-down"—if there be any truth in it—seeing that the band itself was all enthusiasm for him that night. Stay, though! "Nous dînons ensemble avant le concert," said Berlioz. The indiscreet excitement of that friendly dinner, probably at Sainton's (if not at Hogarth's—*vid. inf.*), *may* have a little unnerved the conductor, just as we find him prostrated by "a small error of diet (1 glass of red wine with my bouillon at lunch)" in Paris four years hence (*M.* p. 183).

Enough: with that concert his torments are over—he will never be shewn the reports on it—his remaining hours in London may be given up to merry-making. "After my final concert Berlioz visited me once more, with the rest of my few London friends"—he writes Liszt, July 5—"His wife was with him this time; we kept it up until 3 in the morning, and parted with hearty embraces.—I told him, too, you meant to visit me in September, and begged him to make it a rendez-vous. His chief obstacle seemed to be the money point, but I feel sure he'd like to come. Please let him know exactly *when* you think of doing so."

We have two other accounts of this last London dissipation; three, if we split Praeger's twofold incarnation. Says *As*: "That evening our last festive gathering was very jovial. Wagner expressed himself with all the enthusiasm his warm, impulsive nature was capable of; he was deeply sensible of the value of his stay here [? !]. He had almost retired from the world, but now Paris and Germany would again be brought to hear of him [! !]. He regretted much the spiteful criticism that had fallen upon me, and which I was likely to meet with still more. We remained with Wagner until about three in the morning, helping him to prepare for his departure from London that 26th June." The idea of Hector and Marie Berlioz passing toothbrush and sponge to Ferdinand and Léonie Praeger, for packing into Richard Wagner's handbag, is quite too comic; but no—*As* has no thought except for "me"—the identity of "We" is not unriddled. *Wie* even

forgets to tell us of a "festive gathering" at all, till it has nearly broken up, but wafts us straight from Hanover Square to "Wagner himself was immensely pleased, on the whole, that so much recognition had been paid him in spite of the enmity of the journals. 'I had become a hermit in my Zurich exile,' he told us, 'this journey tore me somewhat violently out [of what?] and yet has brought me into touch with another outer world again; and in spite of the enmity of the press I have also won, you see, your [plural] love and friendship. As for you (*Du*)'—addressing myself—'I'm sorry for you; for you have to bear the chief brunt of it, since it was you who [did not] move the Philharmonic to call me over. But in return you shall come to Zurich in the summer [which?], and Minna will look after you, and you shall make the acquaintance of my parrot and my dear Peps; and then we will go up the mountains, and you shall learn to climb, and we will talk of Schopenhauer's philosophy, etc.' [upon my honour, this is *not* a parody, but a scrupulously fair translation]. It was the last concert-evening, and the mixture of sorrow, which we did not want, however, to display aloud (*laut zeigen*), brought us into such an exalted state that people most probably might have ascribed it rather to the champagne punch [nasty 'mixture'!] than to this conflict of feelings, in which one almost had to force up merriment to keep one's tears back! It was broad daylight when we left Wagner on the morning of the 26th June [why not have seen him off at London Bridge?]. Surely Bulwer is right when he maintains that 'Earnestness makes out Man's highest Majesty.' It was Wagner's earnestness in art, which, through his artist-deeds in London, propounded problems to the whole artistic line ["*der ganzen Kunstrichtung*"—don't ask me the meaning] for all ages to come, whereof the next generation already is shewing the blessing-bringing fruits."

Even the memory of that "mixture" tends to an "exalted state," it seems, too exalted for the English mind to be admitted to; but where are all the others, where is Berlioz? Both versions have tucked him into a corner in front of the concert—an indirect Berlioz, to be precise. "At that time I had in London a friend on a visit from Paris"—says *As*—"a musical amateur of gift, named Kraus. He was in the confidence of the emperor of the French, holding the position of steward to a branch of the Bonaparte family ["which lived in Bayswater," says *Wie*]. I invited him to meet

Wagner, of whom he was an admirer. Now listen to what took place [*Wunder muss ich euch melden—Gtdg* iii]. Wagner did all that was possible by persuasive language to induce Kraus to move the emperor to do something for Berlioz. It was to no purpose that we were told the emperor was not enthusiastic for music, and that so many impossible difficulties were in the way. Wagner kept to his point; Berlioz was poor, had been compelled to resort to pledging trinkets, etc., whereby to live [?], and that it was a crime to the art which he, Kraus, professed to love, that Berlioz should be in want. I have thought this incident worthy of notice, as showing the good-will of Wagner for a brother-artist was stronger than the icy restraint that existed between them when they met." A weird tale from beginning to end—perhaps somebody can pull it straight by discovering *who* this "Kraus" really was—but if there is no more truth in its main body than in its final clause, it has small value indeed; for the personal relations between Wagner and Berlioz, as already seen, were particularly expansive in London from first to last.

Now for Berlioz' own account, from his letter of July 5 to Théodore Ritter: "Ella's matinée [June 26], where the said Ella presents Meyerbeer *to his public*, between two bishops.* Departure

* See *M. Wd* June 30: "Among the guests was M. Meyerbeer, who was conducted by the Director of the Musical Union to a seat of honour in the most aristocratic corner of the room, close to Mr Ella himself, and between 'London' and 'Canterbury.' As soon as the celebrated composer was recognised, the whole audience stood up, and gave him an enthusiastic reception." How general this adulation was, in London, may be gleaned from a leader in the next issue (July 7): "Judging from the manner in which he is fêted and received in all quarters, the composer of the *Huguenots* will not find cause to regret his visit to the metropolis of Great Britain, after an interval of three-and-twenty years. In all places, high and low, wherever music is loved, Meyerbeer is honoured and fêted. From the palaces of Princes, Ministers, and Ambassadors, to the concert rooms of Exeter and St Martin's Halls, there is a general demand for his society. He must eat everyone's dinner, and hear everyone's concert [no need to bribe in London]. So that, what with his daily occupation at the theatre, during rehearsals [*l'Etoile*], and his numerous engagements, morning and evening, Meyerbeer must have his hands full, and very few minutes to spare. Nevertheless, at 7 A.M., day after day—those who get up *soon* enough, and have the wish, may see the celebrated musician taking his 'constitutional' walk in Hyde Park, some hours before breakfast. It is at this early period of the day that he *composes*—like Auber, on horseback, in the Champs-Elysées, and Spohr, in his garden, at Hesse-Cassel.—Like another musical 'Jew,' Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy—whose genius (so

of Wagner after worthy Mr Hogarth has presented him in turn to Meyerbeer, asking these two celebrities if they are acquainted. Delight of Wagner at leaving London; recrudescence of fury against him among all the critics, after the last concert in Hanover Square; as a fact he conducts in the free style, as Klindworth plays the piano, but he is very engaging (*attachant*) in his ideas and conversation. After the concert we go to his rooms to drink punch, he renews his expressions of friendship, he embraces me with fervour, saying he had had a heap of prejudices against me; he weeps, stamps—hardly has he departed than the *Musical World* publishes the passage from his book where he disembowels me in the wittiest and most comic fashion: delirious joy of Davison in translating it to me. 'The world's a stage'; 'tis Shakespeare and Cervantes that have said so."

Yes, by another quaint coincidence, the same issue of the *M. Wd* (June 30) which announced the departure of Wagner,

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thoroughly anti-Weimarian) also excited to boiling-heat [? !] the impuissant though acrid bile of the composer for 'the Future,' not 'the Present' (*Dieu merci!*)—Meyerbeer has an immense popularity in this country. He has also deserved it *universally*, since the fiendish subtlety of the sophist Wagner, however it may specially classify, analyse, dissect, *cut to pieces* (as Mozart and Beethoven cut melody according to 'the Books'), or *grind to powder*, cannot get over this difficulty—that Meyerbeer has given, through his music, delight to thousands upon thousands in every town and city where there is a lyric theatre. True, his 'melodies naked' have become the property of the crowd [outside the opera-houses ?], which there is no danger of ever being the case with *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, where there are none to strip. But what of that? So have Mozart's, and so have even Beethoven's [?]—and so it should be. Wagner may rave against 'absolute melody,' till musicians pronounce him an 'absolute' noodle; but he will never succeed in his crazy crusade. Time will prove to himself and his besotted apostles, that the only '*unbesiegliches Leder*'—the only '*unconquerable* (!) hide'—they have to deal with, is not Meyerbeer's."—As for Ella, his partiality leant rather toward the notoriety than the man, for we find the *M. Wd* of July 14 rating him for saying in his *Record* of July 10, *inter alia:* "My only interview with Wagner, at Dresden, in 1846, impressed me with profound regard for his talent. . . . Those who have enjoyed the society of Wagner, during his sojourn in London, entertain a high opinion of him, both as a man, scholar, poet, and musician" etc. In course of a long leader hereon Davison remarks: "Just after Meyerbeer's visit to the Musical Union . . our Director thinks fit to publish in his programme a sort of half-defence, half-panegyric, of the bitter and unscrupulous *hater* of that celebrated musician. But Mr Ella is not merely ignorant of Wagner's theories; he was never even present at a concert where Wagner conducted!" What a queer set they all seem to have been.

had duly reached the Berlioz passage in its Englishing of *Oper und Drama.* But it also had reached something more—viz. Meyerbeer's "gulping down even Berlioz's New Romanticism, as a fat, fine-flavoured oyster." There was balm indeed for Berlioz' wounded feelings, if wounded they were—which I doubt*—for his letter of June 24 to Liszt had rapped out: "Meyerbeer has just arrived; his *Etoile* is rising at Covent-Garden [in rehearsal], but rising very slowly. It would appear that his recitatives torment the singers horribly. Father Lablache went the length of a fit of rage, or despair, on this subject the day before yesterday." Even the now-famous letter to Ritter has its sarcasm on "the great man's colic" and arrival at a soirée of Glover's "quand tout le monde avait fini de se désoler" for the cause of his absence. No, there decidedly was no love lost twixt Berlioz and the gulper of his orchestra (in a double sense). As for the criticisms in *Op. & Drama* on himself, even his thick-and-thin adherent M. Tiersot has to own that the mere fact of Berlioz being placed by Wagner in company of Gluck, Mozart and Beethoven, "shews a quite particular consideration," and, "taken with its context, the passage in *Opera and Drama* devoted to Berlioz is far from being unfriendly" (*malveillant*).

Returning to Berlioz' remarks on Wagner, a valuable gloss on that "il conduit en effet en style libre comme Klindworth joue du piano"† is supplied by M. Tiersot, who explains that "Berlioz had the classical traditions of the Conservatoire de Paris; Wagner inaugurated the modern style of interpretation"—to which one might add that Berlioz only heard the *last*, perhaps the slovenliest of the eight Old Philharmonic concerts. In any case, there cannot be the smallest doubt that the whole spirit of these two men's life-work radically differed, that each ploughed out his lonely furrow for himself, those two great furrows which have

* See an earlier letter to Liszt, plainly referring to these pages of *Op. & Dr.*: "As to the lines you speak of, I have never read them, and do not feel the least resentment about them; I have aimed my own pistol quite often enough at the legs of passers, not to be astonished at receiving a little buckshot in my turn." That was at the end of July '53, just before the trio's rendezvous in Paris.

† Higher up in Berlioz' letter to Ritter (a *jeu d'esprit* with hardly a full stop or semicolon from beginning to end) Klindworth's "sempre tempo rubato" rendering of Henselt's concerto, the day before, is described as having kept B. "dancing on the slack rope for the best part of an hour."

changed the face of modern music, yet which rarely meet. Almost direct antagonists in art, however, as men their temperaments were similar enough to inspire them with an occasional craving for each other's company — perhaps too similar to let that craving long outlast its momentary satisfaction.

Be that as it may, this London meeting has a sequel which shews that the parting "embraces" were sincerely meant, and it is Wagner who is the first to remember them. He writes Liszt early in September: "Your essay on the Harold-symphony was very beautiful, and has warmed my heart again. I shall write to Berlioz tomorrow, and ask him to send me his scores : [telling him] he will *never* quite know *me*—his ignorance of the German tongue forbids, and he will always see me in fallacious outline—so I will make honourable use of my advantage, and try to bring him all the closer to myself" (of course through study of B.'s scores). Wagner did so write: his letter has not been preserved us, as Berlioz once made a holocaust of private correspondence; but Berlioz writes Liszt Sept. 10: "I have received a very cordial and charming letter from Wagner; I am just about to answer him"—and Berlioz' answer has * :—

10*th September* 1855.

My dear Wagner,

Your letter has given me very great pleasure. You are not wrong in deploring my ignorance of the German language, and what you tell me of the impossibility in the way of my appreciating your works, I have many times said to myself. The flower of expression almost always fades beneath the weight of a translation, however delicately that translation be made. There are accents, *in true music*, that need their special word; there are words that need their accent. To separate the two, or give them mere approximates, is like suckling a puppy at a goat, or vice versâ. But how avoid it? I have a diabolical difficulty in learning languages; it is the utmost if I know a word or two of English and Italian....[*Sic*, as with the other dots in this letter].

So you are busy melting the glaciers with the composition of your

* Facsimiled in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* of Nov. 26, 1903; a facsimile proving that the *dots* in the reproduction of this and other Berlioz-to-Wagner letters in the *Bayr. Blätter* of Oct. 1905 are faithfully copied from the original, and do not stand for editorial omissions, as might be hastily supposed.

Niebelungen!...It must be superb to be writing in this presence of majestic Nature!..Another joy denied me. Fine landscapes, mountain-tops, the grander aspects of the sea, absorb me totally, in lieu of evoking a manifestation of thought. I feel, then, with no power to express. I cannot limn the moon except when watching its reflection from the bottom of a well.

I wish I were able to send you the scores you do me the pleasure of asking for; unfortunately my publishers have long ceased giving me any. But there are two of them, even three: *Le Te Deum*, *L'Enfance du Christ*, and *Lelio* (monodrame Lyrique), which are to appear in a few weeks, and those at least I shall be happy to send to you.

I have your Lohengrin; if you could get the Tanhäuser despatched to me, you would do me much pleasure.* The reunion you propose to me would be a fête, but I must refrain from even thinking of it. I shall be compelled to make distasteful journeys to earn my living, Paris producing me nothing but fruit full of ash.

No matter, if we were to live another century, I fancy we should get the best (*aurions raison de*) of many things and people. The old Demi-ourgos up aloft may well laugh in his old beard at the stale farce he still makes of us.....but I will not speak ill of him; he's a friend of yours, and I know you protect him. I am an *impie* who respects the *Pies*. Forgive this awful pun, with which, and a squeeze of the hand, I conclude. Votre tout dévoué

HECTOR BERLIOZ
19 Rue de Boursault, Paris.

P.S.—Behold a flock of ideas of all colours just winged to me, and the longing to transmit them to you....I haven't the time. Consider me an ass till further orders.

This letter is addressed to "Monsieur Richard Wagner, compositeur célèbre, à Zurich (Suisse)," but nothing could be more evident than its writer's undeclared opinion of Wagner's latest-published work: "J'ai votre Lohengrin, si vous pouviez me faire parvenir le Tanhäuser vous me feriez bien plaisir"—not even

* Berlioz was official Bibliothécaire to the Paris Conservatoire, and from a letter of his to Liszt Dec. 13, '58, it is clear he transferred both these scores to that library not long after their receipt. The Minister of State, according to this letter, has just made an unexpected grant for the purchase of scores, and Berlioz asks his Weimar friend for a list of all his works "*en grande partition*," also of Schumann's, adding: "As for Wagner, we have the *Tannhäuser* and the *Lohengrin*; do you know if the *Hollandais* and the *Rienzi* are published, and where?" The fate of Berlioz' copy of the *Tristan* we will not anticipate.

"votre bel œuvre," the ordinary French form of non-committal. Saint Saëns has put the matter in a nutshell, "Berlioz had an instinctive repugnance for enharmonics; in that respect he is the antipodes of Richard Wagner, enharmony made man." Yet, as strenuous artists and like-suffering men, the letter shews that London comradeship had brought their hearts to unison for once, and we need not look too far into the future.

So Wagner has slipped his London noose, at last. How he got away in the early morn of Tuesday, June the 26th, not even loquacious Ferdinand has told us; but I rather fancy Lüders—perhaps Sainton also—accompanied him to London Bridge, as it plainly is to Lüders that the general epistle from across the Channel is addressed June 28:—

"Hearty thanks for your affection, dearest Friends, which could but make egregious London worth something to me after all. I wish you health and happiness, with rescue—if possible—from that dreary life in London! * Were it not for my regret at having left you, I should speak of nothing but my feeling of relief since setting foot upon the continent again. The weather is fine, the air grateful and summery; last night I thoroughly slept off my great fatigue, and am now rejoicing in a fairly tranquil mood, which I hope will soon equip me for my work once more—the only pleasure in life still granted me.

"I have nothing to tell you in the way of adventures, except that I felt rather bad on board, which led to an interesting scene. . [amusing account of sea-sickness, which we will skip]. . This incident so roused my laughter, that drowsiness and malaise vanished, and I reached Calais in fairly good spirits.—The inspection, which did not take place till Paris, went off all right; my lace was not observed [see p. 139*n*].

"Here I met at once my comical friend Kietz, to whom I unloaded my heart about your dear selves. Tomorrow I go straight home, with a Zurich friend [Otto?] who has waited here on purpose for me; so you shall have tidings again from Zurich.

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* *As* having poetised this into "the dreariness of the London pavement," *Wie* transforms it into "das eintönige Londoner Strassenpflaster." The autograph has "aus dem traurigen Londoner Dasein" (*Echte Briefe.*)

"As I am writing to you all, I must ask you to greet each other from me this time. Please do it with all kind heartiness, and moreover, give my sister Leonie a right good kiss for me.

"Adieu, you dear good creatures! Do not forget

Your

RICHARD WAGNER."

VII.

REQUIESCANT.

P.'s duel-libel myth.—Glover's summing-up; Smart's; Davison's, with a little more of Davison; secretary Hogarth's.—Richard Wagner's.

> *The world and I are two stubborn-heads against each other, and the one with the thinner skull, of course, must get it cracked.*
>
> (To Otto, London, 1855).

Abused or coldly patronised on every hand, did Wagner once attempt to take up arms against the London critics?

Unless we take into the reckoning that semi-private letter of mid-June to Fischer (translated in chief part, with humorous editorial comments, in the *M. World* of Sept. 22), he never made the faintest effort to defend himself, still less to carry the war into the enemy's country—so easy of accomplishment, as Davison was quite sportsman enough to revel in the chance of crossing blades. Wagner abstained from a newspaper combat, as all his antecedents might have led us to expect. But it is rich indeed, to find our Parallax take credit to his puny self for that abstention! "Not content with writing bitterly against him, some persons were in the habit of sending him every scurrilous article that appeared about him [Believe it not; either Liszt or Otto would have heard of it]. Who was the instigator I could not positively say [doubtless, yet *Wie* tells *another* tale]. On one occasion, a letter was addressed to Wagner by an English composer, whom I will not do the honour of naming, who had sought by every possible means to achieve notoriety, stating that it was said Wagner had spoken disparagingly of his name and music, and desiring an explanation with complete satisfaction. Wagner was excessively angry. He had never heard the name of the composer, wanted to write an indignant remonstrance, but was dissuaded by me, for I saw both in this and the regular receipt [!] of the anonymously sent papers, an attempt to draw Wagner into a dispute. Of course the writer

was but the tool of others. In these matters Wagner yielded himself entirely into my hands, though he was often desirous of wielding a fluent and effective pen against his ungenerous enemies."

That Wagner was desirous of nothing of the kind, is amply proved by the passage already quoted (p. 224 *sup.*) from his letter of next September to Parallax himself; but the whole story is simply just another of this chatterer's grotesque improbabilities, rendered the more improbable by *Wie's* additions: "It should not be forgotten that I restrained him from every concession [of course P. means some other word], since all the tricks and traps of this whole hostile clique [from which I had deserted?] were perfectly known to me, and I insisted on Wagner's engaging in nothing without my knowledge [lovely!]—and how often [?] did he thank me later, after he had the proofs in his hands that I was right in warning him! For instance, one day he received a letter from a highly incompetent, but most conceited contrapuntist well-known to me, a man who shirked no means or pains to bring himself before the public no matter how; it threatened him with proceedings for libel ["*Ehrenschändung*"—how nicely the tale is expanding], asserting that Wagner had made himself indictable by declaring a 'Treatise on the Fugue' by the writer of the letter absolutely useless, etc., etc. [the appetising "etc."s are *Wie's* patent]. Wagner was furious, and was just about to answer the letter [written in French, then?] when I came to him and stopped him, not without some trouble, by giving him the key to all the plot; for I saw it was clearly nothing but an attempt to draw him into an intensely ridiculous correspondence with such an individual. Wagner gave up the idea of answering, and I afterwards obtained proofs which shewed him how accurate my suspicion had been, and the quarter whence these shameful efforts had proceeded. It goes without saying, the delinquent of the 'Treatise on the Fugue' had no idea of any law-suit, but had been merely set on by a journalist then of high repute to 'pull the chestnuts out of the fire' for him."—All this hullabaloo because Frau Wesendonck sent Wagner a "bass theme" on his birthday!

We are sorry Richard hoaxed you, Ferdinand, but must bid farewell until we meet again, with other friends, in the Appendix. Here come the two brave representatives of Native Talent, of whom well-mannered Glover shall be first to make his funeral oration (*Morning Post* June 27):—

PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.—The valedictory concert of the season of 1855 took place on Monday night. There can be no doubt that this society is rapidly declining . . . exclusiveness, routine, and privilege form but a rotten foundation for any public institution, especially in these stirring times; and, when associated with the worst kind of democracy, as in the present instance, can only lead to utter destruction.

So long as the old Philharmonic was truly conservative, and knew that it had a heritage of glory to sustain, we honoured it; but when it fell asleep upon its laurels, and only awoke to place the guardianship of Art's sacred temple in the hands of an unbeliever in its divinities, our respect was at an end. Could the directors see nothing between blind reverence for the used-up ideas of a by-gone period and the wildest innovation and licentiousness [really, really!] of the degenerate present? They found it necessary to do something energetic and "liberal," simply because they were generally blamed for lethargy and prejudice. They were roused from their comatose state by condemnatory criticism, not by any sudden consciousness of their duties and responsibilities—and what have they accomplished? The claims of native composers were strongly urged, and so they unshelved two symphonies written 20 years ago, and an overture nearly as old, instead of commissioning the authors, men capable of producing better works, to compose something new, or encouraging the remarkable talent which has recently sprung up amongst us [where?]. Novelty was demanded, and the directors at once secured the services of a conductor so ultra-modern that posterity alone is expected to understand his musical theories.

Their hastily-assumed nationality was lifeless and unsympathetic with the age; their enterprise, rashness, their novelty—corruption [Venusberg?]. The immediate result of this was a lamentable falling off in the subscription [not in the tone of the *Morning Post* critiques?], and the final one may be easily guessed. It is truly ludicrous to observe how a professedly conservative society can throw itself into the arms of a desperate musical democrat like Herr Wagner, and strive to uphold the present of British art by falling back upon its past.

The Philharmonic Society has evidently misunderstood its position; and another season similar to that whose termination we record will serve only as a discreditable epitaph for the time-honoured institution. These remarks, though severe, are made in no unfriendly spirit [they never are], but because we wish the directors to retrieve their losses in public estimation whilst there is yet time to do so. The old Philharmonic has, doubtless, been productive of much good, by aiding the development of musical taste in England, and none more than ourselves desire that it should maintain the proud position which it has hitherto held.

Exit Glover, wiping his spade. It is Smart's turn next.—Well, Mr Smart, and how do *you* propose to bury Cæsar? H. Smart is quite equal to the occasion, even indulges in a little list of Wagnerian proclivities as conductor, not without its historical interest; so we will return to his *Sunday Times* review of July 1:—

The Philharmonic Season has terminated and we may say of it, that as its eight concerts have been, in the matter of performance, generally inferior to any other series that, in the course of a tolerably long experience, we can call to mind, so the last has transcended all its fellows in its evil qualities. We have no hesitation in declaring the concert of Monday evening the least creditable of the society's efforts during the past five-and-twenty years. As no usual parsimony has characterised this year's operations—as the band with some unimportant exceptions remains unaltered—the executive short-comings, which have been obvious to every auditor, can be ascribable only to the inefficiency of the conductor. Viewed as an experiment, we consider the engagement of Herr Wagner not only a blameless but a highly proper course, on the part of the directors. His reputation with a large section of the German artistic community is vast—his pretensions as trumpeted by himself and re-echoed by his admirers, are of not less than first-class magnitude. It was but fitting then, that in England, where all the greatest music is more thoroughly known than in any equal number of square miles on the surface of the globe, this apostle of a new creed in art should have a hearing. This he has had [of a sort], and in an arena which other great men of the time—say Beethoven, Spohr and Mendelssohn—have deemed sufficient for their purpose [not being mainly operatists], and with what result the concurrence of musical opinion has, long ere this, decided.

Of his music we have already said sufficient in former notices, to indicate an opinion which needs no repetition in this place. As to his power of directing an orchestra, we have no scruple in declaring him, according to our experience, the worst conductor to whom the Philharmonic *bâton* has yet been entrusted. At first we mistook his undecided manner for the result of a natural anxiety and mistrust of his position with a strange orchestra, and believed that this might wear off with better acquaintance with the troops he was appointed to command. But in this we were deceived. The same wavering, fidgetty, uncertain beat which bewildered the band at the first concert remained to puzzle them at the last, and sufficed to prove that, in the mechanical indication of time, he had the first of a conductor's duties yet to acquire [after seven years' control of the Dresden court band!].

As to the mental part, or what, in deference to his sect, we must term the "æsthetic" part of the matter, we have something more to

say. To "read" music differently to the rest of the world may, doubtless, in some quarters be taken for an evidence of genius; and indeed, if such a peculiarity be really spontaneous and unpremeditated, there can be no question of its reference to, at least, keen, manly and independent thought. Unfortunately however, Herr Wagner's peculiarities of reading are too systematic to be admitted into this category. Like all matters of mechanical aggregation, his mode of reading—in so far as it is his own—can be submitted to analysis, and, so tested, very obviously discloses four processes of universal application. Firstly he takes all quick movements faster than anybody else; secondly he takes all slow movements slower than anybody else; thirdly, he prefaces the entry of an important point, or the return of a theme—especially in a slow movement—by an exaggerated *ritardando;* and, fourthly, he reduces the speed of an *allegro*—say in an overture or the first movement of a symphony—fully one third, immediately on the entrance of its cantabile phrases. As these points of treatment are inflexibly applied to all music, no matter what may be its school or nature or feeling, we can but regard them as the empirical rules of a determined innovator, rather than the convictions of a man of genius.

But enough; the experiment has been tried; the Philharmonic Society is satisfied, the artists of this country are satisfied, and we, among the rest, are satisfied—that it will not be repeated.

Native Talent has become insolent at last; let it return to its creative impotence—the doom of all that stiff-necked generation—while we beg friend Davison to favour us for the last time (always excepting that Appendix). It will not be a pleasing farewell turn, but that is his own look out, not ours. See, he has mounted the rostrum, with another and larger slice from his small-type deposition in the *M. World* of June 30 (from which I think Smart cribbed a crumb or two for his meal of next day):—

Once upon a time things were managed in a very strange and—elsewhere—unheard-of fashion in the Philharmonic Orchestra. Its performances were governed by a "Leader" *and* a "Conductor," and, as was natural enough under this dual captaincy, various little infractions of strict discipline now and then made their appearance. Furthermore, as if determined to try how far a bad theory might be pushed, the leader and conductor were changed for every concert. . . . We have said many odd things used to occur under this dispensation. Not a few reverend heads were shaken at Beethoven, even in his mildest moods, partly from bewilderment, but much more, we believe, out of sympathy for his supposed mental aberration. New works, above the average amount of difficulty, were blundered

over for a while, and then pronounced either impracticable or nonsensical, as the humour happened to be. We well remember the fearful mystery supposed to enshroud the Choral Symphony, for example; the awe with which it was regarded, and the unwonted preparations made for its performance [March 21, 1825]. We [then aged 11½] remember the substitution of the square pianoforte for the grand, at which the conductor was habitually posted, in order that, "for that occasion only," he might stand face to face with his orchestra! In spite of these and other little and like eccentricities, matters worked in the Philharmonic Society more smoothly than might be supposed. Its performances were the best, nay the only, expositions of great instrumental music we possessed; its funds were in prosperous plight, and it had already won a European reputation. By and by, however, when listeners had gathered unto themselves critical ears, and would no longer accept names for things, or reputation for actuality, the evils of a divided responsibility began to appear. . . . . .

The "leader" having at length retired to his proper place of *chef-d'attaque*, and the supreme orchestral authority being vested in the conductor, the remedy was as yet but half-applied. There were little vanities to gratify, little jealousies to conciliate . . . To the manifest distraction of the orchestra, and the certainty of rendering a fixed style impossible, every concert had a different conductor:—first, Sir Henry Bishop, then Sir George Smart, then Mr Potter, then Mr Neate, and so forth; all good men and true, beyond doubt, but, in their differences of opinion and still greater varieties of method, doing all that clever men and a bad system could possibly accomplish to banish every prospect of unity of effect and solid improvement in the orchestra. Things move slowly in this constitutional country; but the time having at last arrived for seeing the utter insufficience of this half-reform, the final resolution was taken to appoint but one conductor for the season. Under this last, and only rational, arrangement, the Philharmonic *bâton* has been alternately wielded by Spohr, Mendelssohn, Costa, and Herr Richard Wagner, and this consummation brings us to the end of our little history.

. . . Having run through its evil days, having experienced and redressed the follies of a system unparalleled for absurdity, and having had now some years' practice in the wiser course, we might reasonably expect that the Philharmonic doings of to-day would shine as the sun to a glow-worm compared with its achievements in olden time. Let us see, then, what takes place in 1855. The directors, from some cause not now worth discussion, found themselves without a conductor for the present season, and of course cast about them to supply the deficiency. The selection was not without its difficulty, but the field was, at least, tolerably wide; and after sundry little

coquettings and disappointments, the choice fell on Richard Wagner. Now, in order to treat this selection fairly, let us not lose sight for a moment of who Richard Wagner is and what are his pretensions. He is a poet, musician, dramatist, philosopher, essayist, revolutionist (political as well as artistic), and the assumptive leader of a new musical sect which publicly threatens its determination to overrun and convert the whole of Europe. He must needs have unbounded confidence in himself, for throughout his writings on art we find, either expressed or implied, an unwavering current of assertion that all other musicians are in error, here venially, there flagrantly; and this, not on points of technical detail, but absolutely as to first principles. He alone has discovered the key to their faults; he alone, in his own creations, can exhibit their remedy. Throughout, we perceive the stubborn resolution to cast down the idols of the world and build himself a shrine from their ruins. It was, then, wise, right, and due to the progress of art, that the Philharmonic Society should bring this man to England. All the great kinds of music are intimately known in this country, and if his mission be really one of truth and power to convince of yet greater things, he could scarcely have a riper field for his labour [!].

Well, then, Richard Wagner came to London, an object of deeper curiosity, we venture to say, than was any foreign musician who ever visited us; and, having had full scope, both as composer and orchestra director, for the vindication of his pretensions, he leaves it, we also venture to say, convicted of making one of the profoundest failures on record. Of his compositions we can only repeat what we have before said in other words, namely, that they are the clever and dashing *shams* of a well-read and ambitious man, who, wholly ungifted with the faculty of developing beauty—having, in plain phrase, not a particle of *music* in his nature—would fain persuade the world to mistake his idealess and amorphous ravings for the utterances of a Heaven-descended originality, and thought too profound for ordinary penetration. As a conductor, it is matter of notoriety that, with a band containing some of the finest existing elements, and against which, though it may suit him to arraign it [Where?—Clear proof that Dreisterner was mistaken for his chosen mouthpiece], he will never obtain a European verdict, he has merely succeeded in producing a series of performances much inferior in precision and general merit, on the whole, to those with which the society was chargeable even in those early times with which we commenced this notice. We say this generally of the eight concerts of the present season, and we say it with ten-fold speciality of the last on Monday evening. In those gloriously mistaken old days of the "leader" and "conductor," when the band had not attained the half of its present force, either mental or material, did one ever hear so many slips, messes, perversities—so much bad per-

formance, in short, in a single evening? Could we, by possibility, hear anything worse? . . . How comes it, that, in 1855, since the band must have greatly improved at all points, since the knowlege of all the great music habitually performed must have deepened and strengthened, and in spite of three [?] years' drilling by Sig. Costa—who, however his opinions may differ from our own, is wholly unexceptionable as a disciplinarian—how comes it that the performances of this season have been so markedly worse than usual? [The paragraph is continued by the passage quoted last chapter.]

But there needs no inferential evidence to prove the unfitness of Herr Wagner to conduct a great orchestra. His manner, his attitude, his mere action in the indication of time, are sufficient in themselves. Though square, hard, and abrupt in the last degree, his "beat" is wholly wanting in the decision necessary to fix and carry with him the attention of an orchestra. There is a well-known toy, the delight of baby-hood,—a wooden figure, from the nethermost part of whose person depends a string, which being pulled, the arms and legs are suddenly thrown into contortions of a very amusing, but certainly not elegant, character. To this and nothing else can we compare Herr Wagner, when in the heat of directing an *Allegro*. He gesticulates with much energy, and the least possible degree of grace, but yet fails to indicate the divisions of a bar with anything like intelligible point. On his new "readings," as they are termed, we have but two short observations to make:—first, that in all the music whereof to assist our judgment we have only English tradition and our own taste, we notice that he applies the same description of alteration to similar parts of every composition, no matter what its style or intention, and this is, therefore, merely a mechanical artifice, and not a suggestion of intelligence; and, second, that in all the music we have heard directed by its composer, we notice that Herr Wagner's version differs essentially from the author's, and therefore, Herr Wagner's must certainly be wrong.

The *Times* has said, "One more such season will destroy the Philharmonic Society"; and we may add, one more such conductor will annihilate the reputation of its orchestra.

That is all very well, Mr Davison, but you vitiate a portion of it in a later issue of your journal, next 8th of December, which we shall have to beg you to produce (3-col. leader on appointment of Sterndale Bennett):—

For example:—Mr Costa and Herr Richard Wagner, undoubtedly two [!] of the most extraordinary men of our day, are the immediate predecessors of Mr Bennett in the direction of the Philharmonic Concerts. Both may be said to have failed; but that is nothing, since their failures not only sprang from different causes, but were, in

a very great degree, connected with *party* feeling [you admit it?]. Perhaps neither one nor the other was exactly fitted for such a post, by reason of deficiencies it is scarcely the place to discuss here. But, on the other hand, each had his partisans; and what a furious and indiscriminating, not to say illogical, set of partisans may be readily imagined, when we call to mind that an oratorio composed by Mr Costa [*Eli*, first perf. Birmingham Festival, Aug. 29, 55] has been placed by his admirers on a level with *Elijah* (!), while the dramatic music of Herr Wagner has enlisted a class of uncompromising disciples [not in England, tho'], who would fain elevate him to the rank of a prophet, prophesying an era in which art is to be perfected, the model of the anticipated perfection being exhibited in certain odd and decidedly original works,* which bear his name. Against the influence of two men of this curious stamp, Mr Bennett . . . must combat so well as he may.

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* Since Wagner left England, the *M. Wd* editor has been abroad, and "recently enjoyed the advantage of hearing *Tannhäuser*"—he tells us in his issue of Oct. 13—"It was at the theatre in Cologne; there was a full house, and the opera was much applauded. The success of *Tannhäuser* here, with the public, is considerable; but the musicians [Hiller & Co.] will not tolerate it. The musicians have certainly the best of the argument, since the music is utterly rhapsodical . . . not merely polyphonous, but polycacophonous from first to last . . . the incessant and tuneless *carnival* of the instrumental accompaniments in *Tannhäuser*. Here again Herr Wagner upsets his own theory [?]. His orchestra is in a ferment from beginning to end; and when, perchance, something like a plain phrase is indicated by the voice, it becomes lost in the raging sea of tones. We never before heard an opera in which the orchestra made such a fuss, and to such little purpose. . . . We can detect little in *Tannhäuser* not positively common-place, except where the *diablerie* of Weber is parodied, the fairy-music of Mendelssohn caricatured, or the melodic ideas of other composers appropriated, maimed, and mutilated. . . . *Tannhäuser* is three parts declamatory recitative, which, long before the end, becomes tedious beyond endurance. (*Lohengrin*, which has failed at Cologne and elsewhere, is worse in this respect; and, if what has oozed out, from Weimar [that *Rheingold* score again?], about the *Niebelungen*—the 'four-night opera,' now in preparation—be true, Heaven save us!) . . . We accept the *purgatorium*, with submission; but only as *purgatorium* . . . A man may sustain a fever, buoyed up with the hope of getting rid of it; but were he once assured that the fever was for life, he would commit suicide [Some of us are 'going strong' after 30 years of it]. . . . We are made aware, by a few bars of his music, that [Wagner] has never studied the *elements* of music, never learned how to handle the implements; and that, if it were given him as a task to compose the overture to *Tancredi*, he would be at straits to accomplish anything so easy, clear, and natural. . . . For our own part, taken separately, we find the books and the operas both amusing, if on no other account than their entire originality; but viewing them together, as precept and example, we are persuaded that a more cool imposition was never

There are many things to militate against Mr Bennett. For instance (among others), it is indisputable that the members of the orchestra *will not* (we don't say *can* not) pay the requisite attention to any other conductor than Mr Costa . . . The word of the latter is law, and his slightest wish a command. This was painfully felt by Herr Wagner, last season. We grant that a more unintelligible conductor than the latter never entered an orchestra; but he was a man who, no matter by what means, had reached an eminence not to be despised—an eminence that should have wrested from the members of the orchestra a degree of respect and attention, which, after the *trial* of the first concert, was denied him altogether. No one can have forgotten that the first Philharmonic concert last season went *comparatively* well under the direction of Herr Wagner, while all the others were not only disgraceful to the conductor, but in a very far greater degree to the players—since who in his senses will deny that *one half* of this ill-doing was due, less to the inadequacy of the director than to the shameful inattention of the band under his direction? We put it with sorrow; but it is not the less *a fact.* Mr Costa, no doubt, has effected a vast deal of good for our orchestras; but, on the other hand, it cannot be denied, he has done quite as much harm. . . . Now this power of Mr Costa, which in some respects bears good fruit, in others is nothing short of disastrous. It is all very well for a *chef-d'orchestre* to exercise military discipline; but something more is required, and had this "something more" been forthcoming, Mr Costa would still have been directing the Philharmonic Concerts, in spite of Messrs Card and Williams, who, as flute and clarinet, were not up to the *Eli* mark. This "something more" was sought for in Herr Richard Wagner; but, in place of it, *something less* was got; and thus the man of "the Future" not only made a "*fiasco*" in the eyes of severe musicians, but in the face of the general public, which understood no more of his system than Professor Praeger, or the *New York Musical Review*, its noisiest advocates.

As Davison is ever entertaining, though not always consistent, we will follow him to his last leader for the year, ere returning to his summer garb. Dec. 29, 55, he indulges in four columns upon *Opera and Drama*, more or less, as the *M. World* translation of that work is drawing to a close. A few extracts must satisfy our curiosity:—

Early in the season, a great bubble burst [that bubble was always "bursting"—*vide* the *Nineteenth Century* of a generation later]. Herr Richard Wagner,

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attempted to be passed upon the world." That eternal neglect of evolution; but we may forgive it all for Davison's belated discovery that "the books and the operas" *are* "original."

preacher and inventor of the "Future Art-Drama"—whose name had been, for a long time previously, a sort of menace to music as an "absolute" and independent art—appeared, at last, to speak for himself in these insular countries, and successfully officiated as his own executioner. . . . We need hardly refer to Herr Wagner's inefficiency as a conductor—of other compositions than his own; enough was said at the time on that particular head. Nor is it requisite to recall those specimens of the "future" music which were condemned by genuine connoisseurs and listened to with apathy by the crowd of uninitiated hearers—we mean the overture to *Tannhäuser* and the selections from *Lohengrin*. They received their final judgment [what *would* you say to-day!], and it required no conjurer to point out the dulness and common-place which were their characteristics. Such a wind and dust about nothing was never raised before. But Herr Wagner, we were reminded, must be *read* to be known thoroughly . . . Well, we have essayed our best to obtain for the books a candid and honest judgment [I agree, without irony]. We have laid open our columns, week after week, for many months past, to a close and careful translation (from the pen of an accomplished scholar) of Herr Wagner's most famous treatise, *Oper und Drame*—of which not one word has been omitted, and which we are charmed to inform our readers is rapidly approaching its termination. . . .

The first part of the book, or at least a large portion of it, is amusing enough, although all that can be rationally gathered from it is summed up in the critical opinions of Herr Wagner about other composers. That these are often profound and far-sighted, nearly always original, and clothed in a phraseology as odd and diverting as it is extravagantly metaphorical, few who have been able to wade through the volume will deny. But with the deductions ingeniously obtained by the author from his own premises, in his review of operatic composers, we cannot agree [etc., etc., chiefly on Meyerbeer and Berlioz—then comes a burst of indignation:] Some ill-judging persons—remarks Herr Wagner, in one of his queerest chapters—pointed to the long-expected *Loreley* of Mendelssohn, as likely to give a new life to opera, and arrest its downfall; but Mendelssohn's good angel loved him too well to submit him to the ordeal of certain failure, and took him away in time [*P.* II. 16]. The blasphemy of this suggestion is only equalled by its impertinence. The admirers of Mendelssohn ["the last of the great orchestral composers," *M. W.* Aug. 25.], however, may console themselves with the reflection that nothing such a mushroom musician as Herr Wagner can possibly say against his compositions will rob them of one atom of their value.

. . . . A very masterly and penetrating analysis of the *mythos* of Œdipus and his family, according to the dramatic treatment of Sophocles, is the best thing in the [2nd] volume, and indeed we believe

the best thing in the whole of Herr Wagner's literary works. Nevertheless the plan of applying myth to the purposes of dramatic music is not clearly laid down by Herr Wagner, who in his easy verbosity is apt rather to enlarge and be discursive than to stick to a point until he has thoroughly expounded it. . . . In perusing *Oper und Drame* [D. always spells it with "*e*," therefore can know but little German], volumes first and second, [the reader] will be tolerably bewildered; but when proceeding, with Herr Wagner himself, to examine "soberly" the important act of "parturition"—while music, allied to poetry, is bringing forth fruit in the perfected drama—if his wits be as fine as those of Hermogenes, and at the same time as brittle (which may be presupposed from the fact of his having entered upon such a wildgoose chase) they are likely to snap, and the "eagerly desirous" musician to go mad. Such an abstruse galimatias as this third volume is unequalled among the most vaporous and windy of the German metaphysics. It can *never* be understood without endless toil and contemplation, and when understood, is, for any sensible purpose, worthless. Herr Wagner is a very slow midwife. The labour of his muse must be so great that, ten to one, the "parturition" results in something less considerable than a mouse and more unwelcome than an abortion. *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* are rare examples of this painful bringing forth—this tyranny of poet over musician. . . . Was there ever heard such music as the Lohengrin music! May it please Herr Wagner's "good angel" to imitate that other good angel (in the matter of *Loreley*), and snatch him away to the spheres, where his muse will possibly be appreciated, and his harmonic soul be re-absorbed into the *anima mundi*, before he has time to threaten inoffensive people with an infliction of "the whole" *Niebelungen!*

Why does not Dr Liszt, who raves about Herr Wagner, persuade the unhappy duke of Weimar into the exclusive possession of the "future" man? The inhabitants of Weimar, what with Wagner and the other protégés of their cherished *Kapelmeister*, must, if not quite deaf, be by this time at least as demented as the Duke and the Doctor; and no further harm can accrue to them. Bulow, Brahms [what's *he* doing amongst them?], and the whole *clique* of "the Future," might be invited to take up their residence at Weimar. The rail from Cassel, on one side, and from Leipsic, on the other, might be removed. We should then see a community of musical socialists, something like the New Lanark of Robert Owen, the colony of Ole Bull, or the country described by Gulliver in his travels, where the inhabitants carried their heads under their arms. There would be no want of animal food, since the place is full of geese. Liszt would be in his glory—at the feet of Wagner; and "the Future" might be apostrophised and worshipped by the citizens, until, "parturition" being impossible, the little town became a desert. We merely throw out the hint.

We can afford to laugh to-day, and the more heartily as Davison is by far the wittiest and best-humoured of all the anti-Wagnerians, before or after him. We will therefore allow the *M. World* two final shots, of the month directly following our hero's departure from London. The first comes from the issue of July 14, in course of an article already-cited that deals with some remarks let fall by Ella: "We cannot *all* be unutterably sage; we cannot all be without motes and moles—immaculate—as Ella, and the man of Hamm. Out of the pale of 'the books' it is barely practicable to excel," says Davison satirically. But we may take him at his honest word when he proceeds to say, it is "in the free and conscientious discharge of duty" that he has "criticised Herr Wagner unfavourably. Herr Wagner has been exposed to *no* calumny. He has been condemned in this country, by the best [self-constituted] judges, as a composer on false principles of art, and as an inefficient conductor. What importance we attach, however, to the man and to his writings, may be gathered from the large space we accord to them in our columns, week after week [*Opera and Drama* still running, and into next year]. It is *because* he is a man of amazing eloquence and subtle wit, that we esteem him the more dangerous. To ignore Herr Wagner and his opinions, would be preposterous. To endeavour to expose their falsehood, is the task we have undertaken; and we shall pursue it to the best of our ability." There is a tribute to the man's greatness, you see, even in the keenness of the opposition it provokes. And so we come to our last *M. Wd* extract, the first leader (moderately short) for July 21:—

Although in many respects—and for evident reasons—not a prosperous one, the year 1855 will be remembered, for more than one cause, by the Philharmonic Society. It has solved [!] a great problem in England—the problem of Richard Wagner. The name of this singular man has so long represented from afar something strange and mysterious, the nature of whose strangeness and mystery was wholly unknown, that those in England who thought seriously about music and its interests, perused the announcement of his approaching advent with a sentiment of intense curiosity, mingled with distrust. Some who knew Herr Wagner prophesied that he would succeed in doing in this country what he had failed to accomplish in his own—give a new form to art, and a new impulse to art-progress. Others, however, who also knew and better understood him, were in no anxiety about the result, entertaining a thorough conviction that Herr Wagner,

his doctrines, and his music, would make little way in London, where a healthy taste for music was general, and the presence and example of some of the great modern composers had exercised so strong an influence. Herr Wagner would have to dispel the belief in Mendelssohn [the whole secret], and to lay the mighty spirit of Händel, before he could march a step in his crusade. The dead masters, however, were too much for him. Although they lived a century apart, each had spoken a great truth, which only sophists would dare to assail, and which a whole army of sophists would be unable to root out of the heart of the people. Thus, in a great measure, sacred music—against which the composer of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* is for ever railing *—proved a stumbling-block that upset him, and ruined all his hopes in Great Britain. He was fairly vanquished.

And yet no innovator was ever allowed a better chance of establishing his innovations [! !]. With one of the finest orchestras in the world at his command, and a full license to introduce his own music [? !], what more could he desire? But it turned out that he had scarcely any music to bring forward. At least, he had none of what is termed by himself "absolute music"—music that exists independently, and aims to produce an effect on its own account, without reference to the other arts. The theory of Herr Wagner condemns "absolute music" as an error. Music, according to him, is a woman, that cannot *be*—or cannot be *complete*—without the man, Poetry. All instrumental compositions, even the symphonies of Mozart and Beethoven, are simply confessions of the inability of music alone to express anything [definite]. So that (unwittingly, doubtless Messrs Anderson, Card, and the others, who had either not read or not understood the Wagner-books, invited a conductor from beyond seas, to direct the Philharmonic Concerts, an essential article of whose faith was, necessarily, that all such performances (performances

* "It is a favourite theory with Herr Wagner, that Mendelssohn's popularity here was entirely owing to his having flattered our religious prejudices in England by writing sacred music for us"—Davison's own footnote. As Wagner had not *published* a single word to this effect by that date, though it corresponds so exactly with a passage in his private letter of Apr. 5 to Otto—"It was this deep fervour of the English public, that Mendelssohn gauged so well, when he composed and conducted oratorios; for which reason he has now become the veritable Saviour of the English music-world. Mendelssohn is to the English completely what their Jehovah is to the Jews. And Jehovah's wrath now strikes the unbelieving me; for you know that, among other great qualities, the dear God of the Jews is also credited with very much rancour. Davison is the high priest of this wrath-of-God. What would Aunt [Mathilde] say to my writing an oratorio for Exeter Hall?"—again we have constructive evidence of colportage by Ferdinand, either by private mouth or public pen, unless we are to fasten it on Berlioz (p. 331 *sup.*).

of "absolute music") helped to perpetuate an unnatural error—an error which the great masters had committed, innocently, and thereby placed the art in a false and ridiculous position! It is Herr Wagner's mission to demolish, not to conduct orchestral symphonies. Really, this was very thoughtless of the Philharmonic directors.

No one could have been more thoroughly aware of the inconsistency of accepting such an engagement than the conductor himself, though his views on the merits of purely instrumental music are greatly exaggerated, in part distorted, by the irregular mirror above. But he had accepted it as 'needs must, etc.,' and chiefly as stepping-stone to his province proper, the introduction into London of true German Opera—by no means such a *primâ facie* impossibility, with so Germanised a Court. His hopes, not over-sanguine at the best, had been extinguished by his inability to obtain a really fair, to say nothing of an adequate, hearing for the few samples he offered from his compositions, against that high-tory prejudice which reigned supreme. Listen to what the neutral *Literary Gazette* of June 30, 55, has to say hereanent:* "On various occasions we have expressed our inability to enter into the enthusiasm with which Herr Wagner is spoken of by the admirers of the modern German school, but we think that he has been unfairly treated by some journalists, who have done everything to prejudice public opinion against him. This influence may have aided in causing the season to be less successful than it might have been; but it is only fair to Herr Wagner to say that

* I cannot discover who wrote the musical critiques in this rather short-lived journal (extinct 1858), but it certainly was not a partisan of Wagner's; for its issue of March 17 says, "We have already expressed our regret that, on the retirement of Mr Costa, it was thought necessary to have recourse to foreign aid to fill the post." Nevertheless that first critique continues, "but he showed less peculiarity than might have been expected, while the selection of music, if due to him, was not such as a fanciful innovator (as he is regarded) would have presented. Beethoven's Eroica Symphony, Haydn's Symphony No. 7, and Mendelssohn's Isles of Fingal were finely given." June 2, we hear that Mendelssohn's Scotch symphony—so "disgracefully rendered" in the eyes of Davison & Co.—"and Beethoven's *Leonora* overture, were most effectively given"; whereas the notice for June 16 compares Macfarren's and Wagner's overtures thus: "The contrast between these two works marks well two very opposite styles of taste in modern music—the one being intelligible and animating to all listeners; the other [*Tannhäuser*] unintelligible and uninteresting except to educated admirers, who labour to explain its beauties to the uninitiated"—*not* one of the 'wavers,' then.

his engagement has given great satisfaction to most of the subscribers, and that the Queen and Prince Albert, in expressing to him their gratification, gave utterance to sentiments shared by many who are most capable of judging."

Taking this as a fair approximation to the general truth, it contains an incidental detail, its characterisation of that Philharmonic season as "less successful than it might have been," in direct conflict with the assurance given to the late Dr Hueffer some thirty years later by one of the successors to Wagner's cast-off shoes, viz. "that in spite of the attacks of the Press, the Philharmonic season of 1855 was in a pecuniary sense an extremely successful one. The public were eager to see the man who excited such ire in celestial bosoms, and many of those who came to scoff remained to admire." Only so far as concerns the second concert (*Lohengrin* excerpts) and perhaps the seventh and eighth, is there contemporary testimony to full attendance—always excepting the bottomless unreliability of Dreisterner. Davison, or his vicarious English Musician, may be exaggerating in the *M. Wd* of July 14, 55, when he asserts that "the loss on the season was between £500 and £600" (see cap. II.); but that there *was* a loss, and a substantial loss, is proved by that historic record *The Philharmonic Society of London* published in 1862 by George Hogarth (then aged 79), who writes with full access to documents since dispersed or made away with. In chapter II. we had the first couple of sentences from Hogarth's signed account of Wagner's engagement; we now have arrived at the time for their completion:—

The choice did not eventually prove a happy one. During the season of 1855, Herr Wagner, though he discharged his duties with great care and assiduity, was unable to gain the confidence of the orchestra or the favour of the public. The second concert of this season included a selection from Wagner's opera, *Lohengrin*. It is impossible to judge of the character of a dramatic work by means of two or three fragments performed in a concert-room; but certainly the selected passages, chosen doubtless as being the best fitted for this mode of performance, did not seem so obscure and eccentric as the public had been led to expect, and some portions of them—being natural, simple, and melodious,—were listened to with favour. The subsequent performance of Beethoven's *Choral Symphony* was accompanied with an "analysis" from Herr Wagner's pen, a translation of which was printed in the programme of the concert, an able

and ingenious essay, showing a careful study of the work, but obscured by the ultra "æsthetic" style, peculiar to the German school of art-criticism, which only perplexes and mystifies the less subtle English mind. At another concert the overture to *Tannhäuser* was performed, under the same disadvantages which attended the other specimens of his music. The audience found its instrumentation very noisy [did they rise in a body and say so?], but were necessarily unable to form any notion of its dramatic design, or of its effect when heard in its proper place, the theatre, and as an introduction to the opera itself. One fact respecting the operas of Wagner is undoubted. Be their merits what they may, their present popularity throughout all Germany is unbounded, and affords a strong presumption in their favour. The recent failure of *Tannhäuser* when produced [March 1861] in a French dress at the Grand Opéra of Paris, may be cited as affording a presumption the other way. But no one can have read the accounts of this occurrence given by the Parisian journals without being convinced that the opera was driven from the stage by the efforts of a hostile cabal. The English public, in truth, is not now in a condition [position?] to form an estimate of the character of Richard Wagner [i.e. his works].

The most remarkable occurrences of this season, beside the above, were, the last appearance at these concerts of the admirable Ernst, who has ever since been disabled by continual ill health from the exercise of his profession; the production of Mr Lucas's symphony in B flat, an early but masterly work of the composer, which was received with well-merited favour; the performance by Mr Charles Hallé of Chopin's concerto in E minor, a work in which this composer's genius appears to less advantage than in those exquisite mazurkas and other *morceaux de salon;* and the repetition of Potter's excellent symphony in G minor, which experienced even a warmer reception than it had ever met with before. The season, altogether, was neither pleasant nor successful; and, at its close, Mr Wagner hastened to take his departure from England.

How frigid it all is, how Anglo-Saxon! Alike Hogarth and Davison are visibly scared by that stupendous bogey, Richard Wagner; but ten times rather the pungent Gaelic abuse of James Davison, than the condescension of George Hogarth. This, however, is Philharmonia personified—the prim dame who deemed she had done her whole duty when she added Wagner to her visiting list, of Honorary Members.

That was the initial mistake—the old lady's intense and expensive respectability. What business had she with such a firebrand as Richard Wagner? A most unnatural flirtation, it could

only end in one way. True, there probably was no English class that felt the strain and drain of the last months of the Crimean War more personally in heart and purse, than that which formerly had filled the benches of Hanover Square; and to this cause may be ascribed a good share of the ill success of Wagner's season. But look at the coincident budget of the rival society, with its halved prices, but vastly larger hall ("nearly 2000 persons" at one concert): even under the plodding lead of Dr Wylde, and after paying all expenses, it was able to present large sums to charities—over £300 to St Mary's Hospital through its second concert,—whereas we have seen how the Old made a small net loss under Saint Michael himself in '54. Clearly, the days for these costly luxuries were passing (shrewd Costa must have guessed it), and it is a thousand pities the offer had not come to Wagner from the New, instead of from the Old Society. A cheaper (younger) audience, and a larger withal, would have been far easier to rouse to warmth. Enthusiasm once kindled, it must have sucked the bulk of the critics into its glow: never can they withstand the public will for long, however they seek to daunt it. As it was—but let Wagner himself conclude this volume:—

"Nothing ever remained with me, there, but a bitter sense of degradation; exacerbated by the thought that I was forced to digest whole concert-programmes of the most repulsive length and taste-and-sense-defying aggregation. My going on conducting to the end, was simply out of regard for my wife and particular friends [undoubtedly Otto and Sulzer], who would have been much grieved by the results of a sudden departure from London. Now I'm glad the thing ended, at least, with good outward appearance; I really was pleased with the Queen; to a few private friends I gave pleasure myself—and so—basta! The *New Philharmonic* fain would have me next year: what more could I wish?" (To Liszt July 5).

The offer of the New society arrived too late; the mischief was done. Practically a year lost to Wagner's creative work, for nothing but a dole of money, spent almost ere he left us. Twenty years lost, and more, to England's own musical progress.

Which was the moral victor? A press that pursued him with contumely; or the man who left our shores without a public word of scorn?

APPENDIX.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES.

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"Famoses Blatt" (*p.* 373).—*Ferdinand Praeger's Wagner-book* (*p.* 375).—*Chorley on Lohengrin and Tannhäuser* (*p.* 418).—*Marschner and Wagner* (*p.* 425).—*Latter-day Impertinence* (*p.* 429).—*Davison's God-speed to Wagner* (*p.* 437).

Page 36. "FAMOSES BLATT."—Both sides of this "curious sheet" are reproduced in that recent issue of the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* mentioned in my text, and the two sides are indeed in curious contrast, as stated in vol. i; for the second presents the rough draft of a tripping vaudeville-chorus, to words such as "Allons, bons compagnons, danseurs et biberons, descendons gaîment la Courtille." Now if we turn to Wagner's *Parisian Amusements* (*P.* VIII.)—a sprightly article contributed to the second quarterly number of *Europa* 1841, beginning "Since March the Paris winter is at end"—in its account of the Carnival of that February we find the following: "The weather was raw and forbidding, and everybody preferred to see the *Descente de la Courtille* at the Théâtre des Variétés, to joining in the actual fun outside." Gasperini, moreover, has told us Wagner did write music for a vaudeville of this name, and although the bulk of it was rejected after a rehearsal or two, the stage-company declaring it quite unsingable, yet one chorus "Allons à la Courtille" was positively performed. Here, then, we undoubtedly have the embryo of that unique humiliation, and together with it the date of one side at least of the *Famoses Blatt*, i.e. circa January 1841.

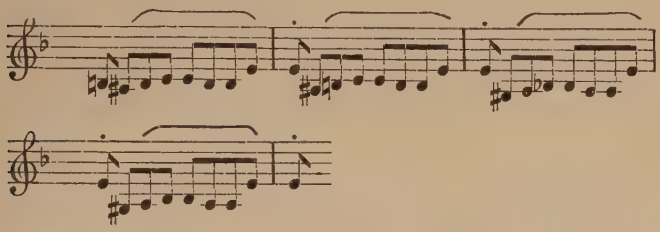
What of the first page, the important side, which bears the pencilled superscription — naturally added a quarter of a century later— "Famoses Blatt"? This presents the whole *sostenuto* Introduction and the first fifteen bars of the *Allegro*, or "Molto agitato," of the *Faust* overture itself, though without distinctive title. Hitherto we had been given to understand that it was merely an "erster Entwurf," or first rough draft; but, as pointed out by the gentleman who reported on it to the *Wochenblatt* of last October (1905), this plainly is no germ: it is a finished product, so far as it extends, and evidently was intended as the opening of a pianoforte transcription from the full score, details of the instrumentation being indicated here and there. On this hypothesis, the most rational date to

assign to it would be January or February 1840, i.e. a year before the chorus, or *chanson*, outlined on the other side.

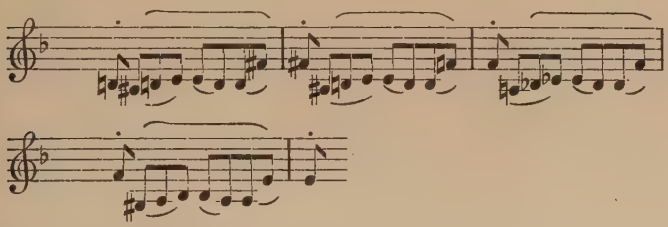
But here steps in Herr X, the *Wochenblatt* contributor, and asks how it could "escape" anyone that "two entirely different styles of writing are presented here, Wagner's Paris hand on the chanson, and the quite altered one of his later Zurich period on the 'Faust' fragment?" Certainly there is *some* difference between the two 'hands,' but no more than that between deliberate fair-copying (*Faust*) and hurried drafting (*Chanson*), intensified by the effects of an intervening slavery at "arrangements of favourite airs" etc. from operas enough to sloven any hand. In the essential characteristics of the notation, letter-formation etc., I personally detect no difference whatever, beyond that assignable to haste and carelessness. However, this novel theory of Herr X's is shattered at a blow by one small detail: the treble and bass signs of the *first* linked 'system' on the second page are exact replicas of all those on the *Faust* page, and this 'system' further bears the *Faust* key-signature, one flat; whereas the *second* system on page 2, in addition to very slovenly bass and treble signs, bears its own correct but roughly penned key-signature, *two* flats. Obviously Wagner had begun to prepare this page for *continuation* of his Faust-transcription, but something interrupted him, some other occupation supervened, and the page was laid aside with nothing inscribed on it beyond a key-signature and treble and bass signs for its first 'system'; then a year later he must have picked up this same ruled sheet at random, and filled its vacant side with music not one note whereof has the smallest connection with his *Faust* on the obverse. The bare handwriting, then, simply *confirms* the belief held heretofore—not to mention the improbability of Bülow's practised eye having deceived him when he attributed both sides of the "Blatt" to the early 'forties, still more, of Wagner's having placed the cart before the horse when he superscribed it.

When it comes to an asseveration that this recovered *Faust* fragment "does not differ from the version known to us," i.e. from the revised form of 1855, I have still stronger issue to join with Herr X; for it is just in its clearly visible shades of difference that the whole interest of the recent publication lies, and they are exhibited by 12 bars out of the total 47! Here is a catalogue of them, which I have this moment prepared. The four opening bars of the *Sostenuto* on the "Famoses Blatt" correspond to but *two* in the '55 version; their theme is the same, but in the older form it was 'augmented,' i.e. each note had double the time-value it has to-day—in itself that stamps this sheet as of the period heretofore assigned it. Then in bar 12 (now 10), where the scoring is indicated, we find "ob. & cl."; no flute, as now. Bar 24 (22) has a *strictly* chromatic run of nine demi-semiquavers, as against our partially chromatic six. Bar 31 (29) has

a distinct *e* in its deep bass chord, where the *b* flat of the present score is un-accompanied, though supplemented in Bülow's pfte arrangement by a decided *f*. Bar 32 (30), marked "Timp." above the lower clef, gives *two* quaver thuds to the drum, in lieu of the later single semi-quaver. Finally, and of even greater significance than the change first remarked, bars 6 to 9 of the *Molto agitato* display the following clear divergence :—on the "Blatt" they all lead up to *e*, while they fall into two balanced pairs,



whereas in the Zurich, i.e. the definitive version, we have a chromatic shading from *f* sharp down to *e*, and a corresponding transposition of the thematic figure in the third of them,



It is this small change, quite likely to escape a hasty reader, that makes us the most deeply regret the arrest of the 1840 transcription at so early a point, for it shews the plainest "what sort of spirit had descended on" the composer with efflux of the years (p. 35 *sup.*). And so the reproduction of this long-neglected *Blatt* makes us still more eager for the time when the whole 1840 version shall at last be disclosed.

Page 48. FERDINAND PRAEGER'S WAGNER-BOOK.—Looking through a pile of documents accumulated round this curious product, the other day I came across the following morsel from a review of vol. ii of the present *Life* in the Literary Supplement to the *Times* for July 4, 1902 : "The undignified allusion to the late F. Praeger's 'Wagner as I knew him' is in very doubtful taste. If the letters quoted there have no authority, it should not be a task of any special difficulty to

establish their falsity ; it is not enough to dismiss them as cursorily as Mr Ellis has done in a footnote, without any scrap of documentary evidence in support of what he says. If the authenticity of the letters has been disproved by such evidence as would convince the unbiased reader, we have a right to expect some reference to the materials of proof."

When I read that criticism first, three years ago, I wondered if the musical critic to the *Times* had ever heard of a work by his immediate predecessor, the late Dr Hueffer, entitled *Half a Century of Music in England*, wherein F. Praeger's book was thus condemned in advance of its publication : "Whether it was M. Sainton or Mr Praeger from whose head the Wagner idea sprang ready-made, Minerva fashion, those two gentlemen, who are both still amongst us, must settle between themselves. But Mr Praeger is quite mistaken when he says : 'the first correspondence concerning the matter was between Wagner and myself.' . . . The point is of very little consequence ; but when historic statements are made, and authoritatively contradicted, it is as well to be accurate." With all that Philharmonic matter I now have dealt exhaustively, at risk of being once more charged with "doubtful taste," since *I* also prefer accuracy to compliments. But that is almost a digression here, as the later *Times* critic set up no claim to second-sight, was merely dealing with my second volume ; so I must find out what it really was, that irked him.

Let me see—he said "a footnote"? Luckily I furnished that volume with an index, or I should be rather in the dark as to the *Times*-offending page. Ha !—clearly this is the culprit, page 190 : "Judged by internal evidence, the alleged letters from Roeckel in *Wagner as I knew him* must be classed in the same category as a large proportion of the letters 'from Wagner' in the same book." It did not fall within the purview of that volume to go into this widely-ramifying question, with which I had already dealt at great expenditure of time and space elsewhere ; and doubtless some resourceful confrère of my *Times* reviewer has since assured him that Queen Anne *is* dead, for the "materials of proof" had caused no little stir in critical circles a few years previously. But as I have of late remarked a tendency in quarters other than Printing-house Square to cite F. Praeger's Wagner-book as an authority, I am now obliged to deal with it and the history of its demolition at greater length than I had hoped would ever be needful again. A new generation seems nowadays to arise about every ten years, and its education has to be taken in hand accordingly : will the reader forgive me if the first person singular plays a leading part in that procedure? It cannot be avoided.

I fancy it was in 1885 that I joined the then two-year-old London Branch of the Wagner Society, though I had been a devotee of Wagner's works for fully ten years previously, and devoured most of

the literature then available on the subject, without encountering the name of Ferdinand Praeger. In 1885 Mr Praeger was aged 70, as we are informed by himself, and I—well, less than half that. I do not remember to have seen him often at meetings of the Society, and cannot discover that he ever gave us an address on his personal reminiscences, though I find that in May 1889 he took part with others in a friendly discussion following the reading of a paper by Mr Louis N. Parker. At the beginning of 1888 *The Meister* was founded as the Quarterly magazine of our Branch; Mr Praeger did not die till September 1891: on no occasion did he offer any literary contribution to its pages,—I say this as no reproach, merely to shew how small was my acquaintance with his capabilities. On the other hand, I find a brief notice in the *Meister* for February 1890: "On January 23rd a symphony by an old friend of Richard Wagner, and a valued member of the London branch, Mr Ferdinand Praeger, was performed at Mr Henschel's Symphony Concert. The four sections of this work are fused into one; but as the whole piece only takes about twenty minutes in performance, the need of pauses is not experienced. Mr Praeger met with a most enthusiastic reception, and was heartily applauded for a work which is full of depth." At this distance of time I cannot say who wrote that note, excepting that it has the appearance of being the handiwork of a more practised concert-reporter than myself; but I can attest that it was I, as editor, who wrote this epitaph in the *Meister* of November 1891: "By the death of Ferdinand Praeger we have lost a faithful member of the Society, Wagner's earliest friend in London, and a composer whose modesty debarred his fame." In those days I could only speak of him from hearsay, but all my friends in the Society had nothing save kind words to say about the aged man.

That was my mental attitude when *Wagner as I knew him*, to which we had all been looking forward eagerly for some time past, made its first appearance in a questioning world. In my own copy I find "Feb. 27th 1892" as date of its receipt, and consequently of one of the bitterest disappointments I ever experienced, since the most random dip into the book revealed its worthlessness as history. Let me adduce one specimen, harmless enough in itself, but useful as an illustration:—Chapter II. begins with a "story I had from Wagner in one of our rambles at Zurich in 1856"—this date, though consistently adhered to by Praeger, should be 1857, the only year in which he was with Wagner at Zurich. The "story" runs into over two pages of matter, sedulously enclosed within inverted commas, so that we are supposed to be reading the master's actual words, or as near as Praeger could recall them; *when* they were recorded, we are not told, but it is hardly to be presumed P. whipped out pocket-book and pencil there and then. And this is how the "story" ends: "'It

was arranged that I should enter the Dresden school in December, 1822, just at a time when my sisters were busy with the exciting preparations for the family Christmas-tree. How good it was of my mother then to let us have a tree, poor as we were! I was not pleased to go to school just three days before Christmas Day, and probably would have revolted had not my mother talked me over and made me see the advantages of entering so celebrated an academy as the Kreuzschule, pacifying my disappointment by allowing me to rise at early dawn to do my part to the tree. Now I cannot see a lighted Christmas-tree without thinking of the kind woman, nor prevent the tears starting to my eyes, when I think of the unceasing activity of that little creature for the comfort and welfare of her children.'" Very touching. Yet one muses—Why begin the boy's schooling at so odd a time, on the edge of the holidays; surely the "three days" is a figure of speech? Then one skips eight pages, and comes to the opening of Chapter III.: "From the record of the Kreuzschule it appears that Wagner entered that famous training college on the 22nd December, 1822." No figure of speech, then; the curious story is apparently confirmed.—But what if we look up a calendar, and find that "22nd" to have been a Sunday! What if we turn to unimpeachable authorities, and find among the full particulars of inscription, "rezipiert am 2. Dez. 1822"! The whole touching episode with the Christmas-tree has flickered out into the careless reading or transcription of a date; its narration by Wagner, in anything resembling this form, can *never* have taken place.

My first note of warning was sounded a month after receipt of the book, for I find the *Musical News* of April 22, 1892, reporting as follows: "Mr W. Ashton Ellis gave on the 30th ultimo before the Wagner Society his second and concluding lecture on Wagner's 'Art Work of the Future.' After alluding to certain errors and inaccuracies in Mr Praeger's recently published book 'Wagner as I knew him,' Mr Ellis" (passed to his subject proper). Two days after that lecture —need I add, quite independently thereof?—there appeared in the *Musical Times* the review by Mr Barry already cited (p. 47 *sup.*), from which I now will quote these further words: "It is to be regretted that Praeger did not live to 'see his book through the Press' . . on looking through it again, he would probably have modified it in several particulars, the treatment of which, as they stand, is partly due to the fact of their having been written down from his dictation—a mode of procedure which weakness of sight and hand compelled him to adopt in his latter days, and one which does not conduce to continuity and elegance of style or to accuracy of diction. . . . He would no doubt also have remodelled the dedicatory letter . . which is dated as far back as June 15, 1885. The very first sentence of this, which speaks of his intimacy with Wagner as

'an uninterrupted friendship of close upon half-a-century,'* is misleading, for it is not till we have reached page 219 that we learn that he did not make Wagner's personal acquaintance until he came to London in 1855, and that up to this time he was 'but the reflection of August Roeckel,' a mutual friend of his and Wagner's, resident in Dresden, and with whom he had corresponded. Thus this 'uninterrupted friendship of close upon half-a-century' is reduced to twenty-eight years." Beneath the studied moderation of this critique it is not difficult to detect the distrust inspired by the object under review; but those were the days *before* discovery of a falsification of "the letters"—or let me say for the moment, of that very first letter from Wagner to Praeger.

Besides Mr. Barry's and my own, to the best of my belief the only other voice raised in the English press of those days against this pseudo-biography was that of Mr. Joseph Bennett, who had but just concluded in the issue of the *Musical Times* for the past December a long half life, half condemnation, of Wagner on his own account. To the *Daily Telegraph* of Apr. 5, 92, Mr. Bennett sent a brief review, part of which I have quoted pp. 47-8 *sup.;* here is the remainder: "Of the making of books about Wagner there seems to be no end. The latest English contribution to that master's bibliography is 'Wagner as I knew him' (Longmans, Green, & Co.), by the late Ferdinand Praeger. The title is misleading, because the first 217 pages of the book are taken up with Wagner as Mr. Praeger did not know him, and 217 pages out of 334 are rather a large proportion. It was not until 1855, when the composer came over from Zurich to conduct the Philharmonic Concerts, that Praeger met with his hero, and manifested with regard to him a devotion so complete that it became a joke of the day. Nor did the two men often foregather afterwards, though letters passed from time to time. It will readily be credited that those from Wagner to Praeger are among the most interesting features of the book. Of course, under the circumstances just pointed out, there is an 'intolerable deal of sack' in the volume, and we are not quite sure that the enthusiasm of Mr Praeger for his own connection with the master did not overlie his sense of accuracy . . [pp. 47-8 *sup.*] . . It is satisfactory to find that Mr Praeger does not swallow Wagner, faults and all. He justly

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* In the third volume of *Das Leben R. W.'s* (issued 1899 as II. ii) Herr Glasenapp says: "We find the first hint of Praeger's book in the year 1884, in a notice which then made the tour of German music-journals: 'Dr' (? !) 'Ferdinand Prager (*sic!*) will presently publish his reminiscences of Richard Wagner, with whom he maintained close friendship for 40 years' (Allg. Mus. Zeitung of 14. Nov. 1884, p. 405)." So, even the increase to "close upon half a century" was gradual.

discriminates between the merits and defects of that strange and strangely imperfect character. For this reason we commend the book, wherein, despite the preponderance of 'sack' over 'bread,' there is much of interest and value." Mr. Bennett's rebuke is mild as milk, but it is worth noting that he could not "swallow" Praeger's "sense of accuracy." Others *did*, and with voracity.

Musical News of March 25, 1892: "It would not be easy to find anyone more capable of writing the biography, and placing before us a picture of Wagner and his life-work, than was the late Ferdinand Praeger. He was something more than a friend of fifty years' standing [what?]. There has just been published by him a book, 'Wagner as I knew him,' and his long and intimate knowledge, together with that enthusiastic admiration for the man whose portrait he has presented to us, gives this book a peculiar value." To that editorial in the *Musical News*—quite a long one, but chiefly noticeable for its childlike trust in Praeger's statements—I ventured to reply, and the editor was kind enough to insert my remarks in his issue for the 22nd of April '92. I will spare the reader all but an extract or two. Speaking of the "deeper shades which are here and there thrown in" by Praeger, I observed that "If those be singled out for comment, apart from their context, there then arises a question as to whether they themselves are in 'good drawing'; whether they are self-contradictory; whether, in fact, they can stand a circumstantial examination. To one or two of these points I propose, with your permission, to address myself, and, as the most swiftly disposed of, I would suggest that Mr Praeger's knowledge of the English tongue must have been sadly at fault when, as cited by yourself, he accuses Wagner of 'amorousness and Hebraic shrewdness,' terms which I can scarcely imagine a man, aware of their full meaning, applying to his *friend*.—Then, again, Mr Praeger accuses Wagner of ingratitude, yet instances the manner in which his hero, at the zenith of his fame, went out of his way to render his future biographer a tribute of gratitude on an important public occasion, the London banquet in 1877. 'Cowardice' is attributed to Wagner on page 185, whilst we find him credited on page 15 with 'fearless intrepidity,' and scattered throughout the book are countless instances of what even Englishmen would call personal 'pluck.' A 'love of enjoyment' is dwelt upon *ad nauseam*, whilst the Preface, in harmony with the writings of Wagner's other biographers, says that he 'rejected worldly advancement, and endured painful privations, because his mission was to preach *Truth*.'" I then pointed out that "Wagner is accused by his latest biographer of an endeavour to 'minimise his share'" in the Dresden insurrection, and that Praeger had cited *fragmentary* extracts from Wagner's writings, wrenched from all context, to uphold his contention; but with that I now can deal more aptly at a later stage.

Before going any farther, it may be necessary to remind the reader that at the time of publication of *Wagner as I knew him* there was *no* other English biography of Wagner on the market. Certainly we possessed E. Dannreuther's most admirable monograph, but that lay buried in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, then obtainable only at a price prohibitive to the ordinary student; Mr H. T. Finck's two-volume *Wagner and his Works* did not appear till 1893. Consequently Praeger was practically first in the field, with us, and the power of his book for harm incalculable.* It therefore became my bounden *duty*, as editor of the London Wagner Society's organ, to make this serio-grotesque the subject of most searching scrutiny; whilst that, again, was only to be compassed step by step, as on the one hand the outer 'sources' were at once voluminous and in many cases undigested thitherto, and on the other the published collections of Richard Wagner's letters were then restricted to those to Liszt, to Frau Wille, and to Uhlig-Fischer-Heine.

So it was in the *Meister* for May 22, 1892 (now out of print), that I began my real, but necessarily incomplete exposure of this book, as my present readers may judge from the extracts here appended:—

"On the one hand, the life of Wagner is very little known in this country at present, and there are but few among us in a position to judge for themselves as to the accuracy or otherwise of estimates of his character, or of statements of facts relating thereto; on the other, I cannot conceive a like importance being attached to this volume in Germany, where there are many still living who knew Richard Wagner far more intimately and for a longer period than did its author, and where the sources of much of the matter contained therein will be readily recognised.

"This brings me to the question of Mr Praeger's claims: for it is upon them that is based much of the rejoicing in certain quarters of the press at the 'revelations' of this book; and the verdict has already been given, in so many words: 'If Wagner's *lifelong* friend can write *thus* about him, that master must indeed have been a contemptible man.' It is our duty therefore to examine these claims, as

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* Two and a half years later, a lady (not a member of the Wagner Society) wrote me apropos of the *Mus. Standard* controversy: "Praeger's book was the first Life of Wagner I read, and of course I could not possibly judge of its inaccuracy, but it made me angry; for I felt that if I had been a friend of Wagner's there were so many things I *never* would have published about him, because one knows there are always people who are only too delighted to catch hold of anything wherewith to defile the memory of a great man. Wagner was always, as you said, made to appear either odious or absurd, and one could well have done without so many trivialities."

formulated in the Preface: 'an intimacy, an uninterrupted friendship of close upon half a century during which early associations, ambitions, failures, successes, and their results were frankly discussed'; and again: 'I believe I am the sole recipient of many of his early impressions and reminiscences, of his thoughts and ambitions in after-life.' And thus we may read through the first third of the book under the impression that, at least from manhood onwards, the two men were frequently in one another's company; for fifty years of Wagner's life would run back to the year 1833, when he was just approaching his majority. But on page 119 we reach the following: 'I have now arrived at the time when my own acquaintance with Richard Wagner began. It was in the beginning of the spring of 1843.'* We are puzzled, however, at finding no record of a meeting, and for the moment believe its omission to have been a *lapsus calami.* However, another third of the book slips by, and finally we come to page 219, where for the *first* time we are told that before Wagner's visit to London in 1855 the author 'did not know him personally.' This statement is corroborated by the first lines of Wagner's letter on page 222: 'I *enter* into correspondence with you,† my dear Praeger.' Thus the half century is reduced to a possible 28 years. But if we examine farther, we find that from the other end also must be subtracted twelve years, as to which the author has 'but little to tell,' in fact only half a page of record of two or three brief meetings.

"We thus have sixteen years of *active* friendship, but of even these the last fourteen are summed up in barely thirty pages, for the most part consisting of letters; and we are at last driven to the conclusion that the three and a half months of London life in 1855, and the two months at Zurich in 1857 [I innocently accepted the alleged length, you see, though correcting the year of that visit—W. A. E. 1905] are the only protracted periods as to which Mr Praeger can speak as an eye-witness. Nor does he seem to have been brought into close contact with those whom we are accustomed to regard as Wagner's immediate circle, excepting for the accounts which August Roeckel furnished of the Dresden period.‡ There is a singular dearth of reference even to Liszt," etc. I may omit the remainder of the paragraph briefly pursuing that theme, but I wish to have it remarked that in the Spring of 1892 I had not yet arrived at suspecting the fundamental genuineness, apart from slovenly translation etc., of so-called "letters" embedded in this petrifact.

* This tallies with the "close friendship for 40 years" trumpeted in the German press at the end of 1884—cf. p. 379 *supra* (Note of 1905).

† I have dealt with this point in cap. II.; here I simply recall attention to the archness of the "translator from the English," when in *Wie* he replaced those words by a colourless "I write you" (Note, 1905).

‡ In which I have *long* ceased to believe; see p. 66 *sup.* (note of 1906).

"It is important to bear this over-statement of claim in mind"— I continued, May '92—"in view of the many other inaccuracies which militate against the author's strength of memory. But how far back was memory taxed? Is the book built mainly upon *notes* of conversation, and incidents recorded at the time? Mr Praeger nowhere directly states so, and I can scarcely conceive it to have been the case, for there then could hardly have arisen such confusion as to the dates of this or that occurrence. Thus Chapter XXI., recording the visit to Zurich, is headed '1856,' and the said visit is so repeatedly alluded to as falling in that year, that we cannot presuppose a misprint in this instance; moreover the chapter opens with 'a domestic picture of the creator of the "Walkyrie," whilst that work was actually in hand,' whereas Liszt thanks Wagner on Aug. 1, '56, for the full score of that work. But it is impossible that the visit should have taken place until 1857, for Wagner was at Mornex in the summer of '56; he did not go to his 'chalet' until the spring of '57; the offer of the 'emperor of Brazil' reached him in the summer of '57; and finally he writes to Fischer in October '57, 'I have had German visitors: Ed. Devrient, Praeger' etc.,—the accuracy of the date of this letter being established by the words: 'I am now composing *Tristan und Isolde.*' This involves a question also as to the correctness of the date of Wagner's letter to Mr Praeger on page 287, looking forward to the visit . . and I cannot but think that 'May 1856' is incorrect . . . The same remark applies to the letter on page 300 of *Wagner as I knew him*, given as dating *after* the Zurich visit, 'July 17th' and apparently 1857. . . .* Now the force of these deductions lies herein: firstly that Mr Praeger's claim, advanced since Wagner's death, to have suggested the subject of *Tristan* for a music-drama is shown to have been quite out of *date;* secondly that no careful record can have been kept even of one of the most important events in the acquaintanceship of the two men, and therefore one can never feel quite certain how much besides has been left, *longo intervallo*, to imperfect reminiscence. . . .

"Unfortunately the inaccuracies of this book well over into the quotations. I have already, in a contribution to the *Musical News* of April 22nd, pointed out how Mr Praeger takes a fragment of a sentence of Wagner's writings and leaves aloof all consideration of its context; drawing thus the most erroneous conclusions. But in some places he *adds* a gloss between his inverted commas: thus on page 130, referring to August Roeckel, he inserts 'unquestioned' before the word 'talents,' and *adds* 'cast to the winds his own chances of worldly success. This companion of my gloom was Roeckel.' Undoubtedly

* As these have since been shewn to fall among the other undiscoverable so-called documents, it is needless to confuse the reader with arguments now outclassed by more cogent ones.—1905 note.

it *was* Roeckel; but this is tampering with quotation. Again, compare with the letter to Fischer of June 15, '55 . . the interpolation given on page 254 . . [see pp. 261-4 *sup.*]. Further, on page 174 there stands: 'In a sketch of these exciting days, written and published by Roeckel at my instigation, he states that Wagner became aware that his friend Roeckel was to be taken prisoner' etc. Now upon reference to this sketch, which is none other than *Sachsen's Erhebung*, I find Roeckel (p. 142 of *S.E.*) stating nothing of the kind, for he mentions no names at all!

"The insertion of the name of Wagner without authority is carried to a remarkable extent in Chapter XV., dealing with the Dresden Insurrection. Thus on page 176 we have the 'pitch-rings' incident, given as in Roeckel's book, *excepting* for the insertion of the name of Wagner; on page 181, 'a witness who swore to the part actually played by Wagner during the rising,' whereas the evidence actually sought and extorted is stated by Roeckel to have applied to nothing but the Prague friends of the latter; and, to omit other instances, I may finally select the crowning gloss on pages 182-3, where we read 'The official accusation of my friend' (i.e. Roeckel) 'is before me, and as Richard Wagner is concerned, I will summarize the charge.' This summary is condensed from that given on page 224 of Roeckel's book, with the important exception that Roeckel *does not once* mention Wagner's name in connection with his own trial."

I devoted about another column of the *Meister* review to the said Insurrection, but as that was dealt with much more circumstantially in my "**1849**" a couple of months later, I will pass to the "frank discussions" said to have frequently and freely taken place between this ill-assorted pair: "Whenever the scanty fragments of conversation here related turn upon more solid matter"—I said in the *Meister*, and adhere to it—"one is astonished to find that, 'original thinker' as Wagner was, it was always Mr Praeger who got the best of the argument, and one cannot smother the impression of an encounter between a schoolboy and his tutor. This is entirely due to the attention paid by the author to mere externals, and I cannot help thinking that occasionally the Bayreuth master played upon his friend a trick like that practised upon Minna, page 293.* . . . In conclusion I

* To-day I am rather proud of that "undignified" flash, for it is exactly what we find Wagner admitting to have been his favourite pastime with P.; see the letter to Klindworth of May '57 quoted p. 123 *sup.* As for the recorded "trick," this is what Praeger himself says on his page 293: "Every morning after breakfast [Zurich 1857] he would read to Minna her favourite newspaper, 'Das Leipziger Tageblatt,' a paper renowned for its prosy character. Imagination and improvisation played her some woeful tricks. With a countenance blameless of any indication of the improvisor, he would recite a story, embellishing the incidents until their colouring became so overcharged

sincerely regret that Mr Praeger's work was not published before his own decease, that thus we might have had many a doubt cleared up by free discussion. As it is: however ungracious a thing it may be, to criticise the work of a dead man, we must remember that its subject also is dead, and cannot now defend himself from friend or foe."

I will confess that one or two valued but uncritical friends in the London Wagner Society took a little offence at the above exposure of some of the shortcomings in this by-product of an old acquaintance of theirs; yet, though I had offered to insert in the next quarterly number of the *Meister* any written expression of a contrary view, not a soul accepted, not a line was sent for publication in reply. Presumably the great majority of my readers were more alive,* than those one or two, to the handle this fatuous book afforded to the master's detractors; a handle welcomed with exceeding joy by the reviewer in the *Spectator* of July 9, 1892, who heads his article "Wagner unveiled" —a pretty testimonial to the "friend of close on half a century." Says this reviewer: "There was no need for the late Mr Ferdinand Praeger to set forth, as he has done in his preface, his qualifications to speak with authority about Wagner. No man in England, and few on the Continent, had better credentials. . . . Praeger was one of the truest and best of the many good and true friends of Wagner. But the sincerity of his affection did not blind him to the defects of his hero, and herein is to be found the unique value of this book. Hitherto, Wagner the man has been the subject either of virulent abuse, or of extravagant adulation. Mr Praeger is the first person who, without a shade of malice, has given us a perfectly unvarnished picture of the man as he lived and moved amongst his fellows. And we have no hesitation in saying that while the wonderful brilliancy and versatility of his social talents are exhibited in striking relief [?!], the result is disastrous to Wagnerolatry. If admiration and respect for the man as distinct from the artist is to remain an integral part of the Bayreuth cult, this book must be placed on the *index expurgatorius* of every Wagner Society on the face of the earth. The Prophet is veiled no longer. Mr Praeger has — though quite unwittingly—done for Wagner what M. Lanfrey did for the great Napoleon." I cannot waste space on reproducing more from this 2½ column war-whoop, and need only add that the fancied proofs on which the reviewer relies for his "unveiling of the Prophet" form the strongest possible indictment of Praeger's book itself, since with hardly an exception they are

with the ludicrous, that Minna would exclaim, 'Ah, Richard, you have again been inventing.'" But Minna did not write a biography founded on such improvisations. (1905 note.)

* Without the faintest complicity on my part, the New York *Musical Courier* of June 15, 1892, reproduced my *Meister* article *in extenso*, under the heading "A just review."

based on gross exaggerations or misstatements in the latter. All I can blame the reviewer for, is his highly un-analytical credulity.

I cannot deny that I myself still took some parts of Praeger's book on temporary trust, and in that *Meister* article I praised him for his "abundant tribute paid to Minna, first wife of Richard Wagner." By the torch of later knowledge his ignorance of the true state of affairs is revealed as much in this case as in any other. On page 61 of *As* says he: "The time he spent in Königsberg [1836-7] was a prolongation of the miserable existence which had followed the breaking up of the Magdeburg company, intensified now, alas, by anxiety for his young wife. It was unenlivened by any gleam of even passing sunlight. The time dragged heavily, and was never referred to without a shudder [so far so good—but] In later years, in the presence of his first wife, he has compassionately remarked, 'Yes, poor Minna had a hard time of it then, and after the first few months of drudgery no doubt repented of her bargain.' To which the gentle Minna would reply by a look full of tender affection. Wagner's references to the devotion and untiring energy of his wife during the Königsberg year of distress always affected him." * If Praeger had been at all admitted into Wagner's intimate confidence, he would have known that this was a period to be shunned in conversation, above all when extolling Minna's "devotion and untiring energy"; for it was at Königsberg she decamped from her husband, causing him to commence divorce proceedings (abandoned later).—Of this fact I was unaware in the 'nineties, but it rather takes the gilt off those "early impressions and reminiscences" of which P. believed himself "the sole recipient."

To get back to 1892: there was one period in Wagner's life, as treated by Praeger, that called for instant exploration, as P. had made it instrumental of a charge which no man should level against an enemy without the most serious deliberation, and one which pointed against a "friend" rebounds against the pointer. Once you have called a man a liar, you have severed all connection with him, unless *the pair of you* are less than normally in love with truth. Wagner has somewhere said, "I cannot lie; 'tis my sole remaining virtue"; yet F. Praeger goes as near to calling him a liar as his idea of an

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* German edition of the last three sentences (*Wie*, p. 60): "I remember quite well, when he was describing this time of misery to me, he pointed compassionately to the attentively listening Minna, and said very feelingly: 'That poor woman there—poor Minna—had a hard time to go through with me then, and no doubt repented also of her hasty step!' but the affectionate glance which Minna bestowed on him sufficiently contradicted any such suspicion. Whenever Wagner spoke of the Königsberg period, he could never avoid recalling Minna's faithful care for him, and many a tear did he dedicate to her then."

"honest understanding of the man and his motives" will permit. He prepares the train in cap. XIII., with these words on his page 139: "As the part which Richard Wagner played in the Revolution of 1848-49 is of absorbing interest, the incidents which led up to it are of importance to be carefully noted . . . Upon this part I cannot lay too much stress." So it would seem, for he evolves from his inner consciousness "an apology to the court" by Roeckel and Wagner in 1845 for "exuberant language" which he, and he *alone*, attributes to them in connection with an émeute at Leipzig (the Ronge incident): "But it rankled in Wagner"—says P.—"His position as a servitor was irksome; he became restive in his royal harness, and vented his annoyance in anonymous letters to the papers"—for none of which statements does P. produce one jot of evidence,* not even his habitual "Wagner told me," or "Roeckel wrote me." Then he begins cap. XIV., headed "1848," with this obnoxious passage: "I now come to perhaps the most important period in Richard Wagner's life, full of deep interest in itself, and pregnant with future good to our art. Additional interest is further attached to it because of the incomplete or inaccurate accounts given by the many Wagner biographers [in the 'eighties they could be numbered on one German hand]. For this shortcoming, this unsatisfactory treatment, Wagner is himself to blame. He has left behind him rich materials for an almost exhaustive biography; he was a man of great literary power, a clear and full writer, and yet, with reference to the part he played in the revolution in Saxony, of 1848-49, he is singularly, I could almost say significantly, silent, or, when he does allude to it, his references are either incomplete or misleading.

"Wagner was an active participator in the so-called Revolution of 1849, notwithstanding his late-day statements to the contrary. During the first few of his eleven years of exile his talk [to whom?] was incessantly about the outbreak, and the active aid he rendered at the time, and of his services to the cause by speech, and by pen, prior to the 1849 May days; and yet in after-life, in his talk with me, I, who held documentary evidence under his own hand, of his participation, he in petulant tones sought either to minimize the part he played, or to explain it away altogether. This change of front I first noticed about 1864 [meaning 1865], at Munich. But before stating what I know, on the incontestable evidence of his own handwriting, his explicit utterances to me, the evidence of eyewitnesses, and the present criminal official records in the procès-verbal Richard Wagner, of his relations with the reform movement (misnamed the Revolution); I will at once cite one instance of his—to me—apparent desire to forget the part he enacted

* What he may have dimly heard of, and transmogrified to this fantastic tale, would be Wagner's letter to von Lüttichau after the Vaterlandsverein address of June 1848—quite another epoch—see vol. ii.

during a trying and excited period. [Syntax and punctuation I religiously reproduce as I find them.—W. A. E.].

"Wagner was a member of a reform union; before this body he read, in June, 1848, a paper of revolutionary tendencies, the gist of which was abolition of the monarchy [?], and the constitution of a republic. This document, of somewhat lengthy proportions, harmless in itself, which was printed by the union, constituted part of the Saxon government indictment against Richard Wagner. From 1871-1883 Wagner edited his 'Collected Writings,' published by Fritsch, of Leipzic, in eleven volumes [nine in his lifetime]; these include short sketches on less important topics, written in Paris, in 1841, but this important and interesting statement of his political opinions is significantly omitted. Comment is needless."—On the contrary, comment is very *much* needed; for Praeger has 'improved' the "evidence of W.'s own handwriting," that "document harmless in itself" did *not* constitute a "part of the Saxon government indictment," and Praeger knew nothing (emphatically nothing at first hand) of those "present criminal official records," as I shall prove in an instant.*

* His scandalous abuse of the term "official records" is demonstrated by pages 178-9 of *As I*, where he says: "Then began that loose organization. And who took part in it? Let the official records supply the answer. I find that when the insurrection was suppressed the government indicted twelve thousand persons [etc.] . . . One more fact from the official report now before me: of Prussian and Saxon troops thirty-four are recorded dead and a hundred wounded," etc. These statistics he simply derives from an unacknowledged blend of A. Roeckel's *Sachsen's Erhebung* with A. von Montbé's semi-official romance *Der Mai-Aufstand in Dresden* (1850), whilst Montbé never even breathes the name of Richard Wagner!—Lower down on his page 179, says P.: "I have reproduced the revolutionary paper which Wagner read before the Fatherland Union, a copy of which figures in the official indictment *re* Wagner." Now, Tappert "reproduced" that paper several years before Praeger, and its *not* having "figured in the official indictment *re* Wagner" is proved by two facts: 1°, *no* such indictment was ever formulated; 2°, this Vaterlandsverein address (for full text see *Prose Works* IV.), to which P. returns again and again, is nowhere to be found among the "charges against Herr Wagner recorded in the Acts" (see vol. ii, 410-1).—Praeger's bathysmal recklessness of assertion is well illustrated by pages 185-6: "As soon as the leaders were taken, and Wagner saw there was no use in continuing the conflict, he fled. He knew not in what direction to turn, but the thought of his precious manuscripts which he had with him determined his course—Weimar, Liszt. And so it fell out. Liszt was good and sheltered him. . . . Under Liszt's advice he left for Paris, the Weimar virtuoso being intrusted with Wagner's precious manuscripts." But Wagner went to Zurich *first* from Weimar, and his "precious manuscripts" he naturally had left at Dresden with his wife, who sends them later to Liszt for forwarding to Paris (see *W.-L. Corr.*, no. 17). "Comment is needless."

But Praeger does not end this style of accusation there. Toward the end of his cap. XV., on pages which his publishers (?) have headed "A convenient memory" and "A significant omission," says he: "And now for a few closing remarks upon this revolutionary epoch. I have alluded to the whitewashing, as it were, of Wagner by his biographers when treating of this period. If it were asked who is to blame, the answer might fairly be, 'Imperfect or inadequate knowledge of the facts,' fostered, I regret to add, by Wagner's own later utterances and writings upon the point. When Wagner visited London in 1855, the Revolution and the thousand and one episodes connected therewith were related and discussed fully and dwelt upon with affection, but as the years rolled on he exhibited a decided aversion towards any reference to his participation. Perhaps we should not judge harshly in the matter; he had suffered much and there were not wanting, and I fear it may be said there are still not wanting, those who speak in ungenerous, malignant tones about the court conductor being false to his oath of allegiance, of the demagogue luxuriating in the wealth of a royal patron. Wagner's art popularity was increasing and his music-dramas were gradually forcing themselves upon the stage, and he did not wish his chance of success to be marred by the everlastingly silly and spiteful references to the revolutionist. But whether he was justified in writing as he did, in permitting almost an untruth [*Wie* omits "almost"] to be inferred and history falsified, I should not care to decide [*Wie*, "is in any case to be doubted"]. . . . As I have stated, the general drift of Wagner's references to the Revolution is to minimize his share; I content myself with two extracts only:—1. From 'Eine Mittheilung an meine Freunde' (a communication to my friends), vol. IV. of his collected writings, and dated 1851: 'I never had occupied myself really with politics.' 2. 'The Work and Mission of my Life,' the latest [! !] of Wagner's published writings, written in 1876 [1879] for America: 'In my innermost nature I really had nothing in common with its political side,'* *i.e.* of the Revolution."

If the reader wishes to see with how little Praeger could "content himself" when it suited his purpose, he has only to look up the remainder of that long paragraph in the *Communication* (see *Prose Works* I. 355) from which P. has so "significantly" cited but the first half-dozen words, and then to pass some two-dozen pages ahead, where he will find another long passage, ending: "Thus did the Dresden rising come upon me; a rising which I, with many others, regarded as the beginning of a general upheaval in Germany. After what I have said, who can be so intentionally blind as not to see that

* Even this couple of truncated lines P. cannot quote without unnecessarily transposing, tho' he clearly takes them from the English of the *N. A. R.* itself, not from the posthumous German Wolzogenisation.

I no longer had any choice but determinedly to turn my back upon a world to which, in my inmost nature, I had long since ceased to belong?" (ibid. 381). As for his second frugality, Praeger had only to turn over that page of the *North American Review* (Sept. '79) from which he pecked his tit-bit, and he would have read: "In the midst of this bitterness against the existing order of things, I found myself amid the general revolutionary spirit which was growing stronger and stronger around me, and which now enlisted my zealous sympathy."

So much for Ferdinand Praeger as "convenient" quoter: now for a little more of him as "uninterrupted friend." In his chapter XXI., recording the hospitality shewn him by Wagner at the famous Asyl: "How was Wagner as a revolutionist at this time? Well, one of his old Dresden friends came to see him, Gottfried Semper. We spoke of the sad May days and poor August Roeckel. Again did Wagner evade the topic, or speak slightly of it.* The truth is, he was ready to pose as the saviour of a people, but was not equally ready to suffer exile for patriotic actions, and so he sought to minimize the part he had played in 1849. It appears from 'The Memoires of Count Beust,' to which I have before alluded, that Wagner also sought to minimize his May doings, by speaking of them as unfortunate, when he called upon the minister after his exile had been removed, on which Beust retorted 'How unfortunate! Are you not aware that the Saxon government possesses a letter wherein you propose burning the prince's palace?' I am forced to the conclusion that Wagner would have torn out that page from his life's history had it been possible."—If such can be the public utterances of "uninterrupted friendship," give me the honest accusation of a good plain-spoken foe.

With what gusto does Praeger play out that trump-card of his, Wagner's alleged incendiarism! But turn to page 411 of vol. ii of the present *Life* and you will find the attestation of Wagner's lawyer F. A. Schmidt—made in June 1863 after "minute investigation of the Acts of Inquiry of the former Kgl. Stadtgericht of Dresden, Criminal Division"—that "there is nowhere even a suggestion that Herr Wagner made the attempt, or had the intention, to set fire to the King's Palace or any other public or private building in Dresden." Now consider that date, June 1863, and compare it with the extract from *As* quoted *sup.*: "in after-life, in his talk with me . . he in petulant tones sought either to minimize the part he played, or to

* How "again"? Praeger had not met him since 1855, when "the thousand and one episodes connected therewith were related and discussed fully and dwelt upon with affection" (*vid. sup.*). But that, again, is contradicted in the chapters dealing with 1855 itself: "As to Richard Wagner's democratic principles, I observed that the solitude of exile had considerably modified them. This I noticed to my surprise and no less pain," etc. As will be seen, it is impossible to pin our Praeger for five minutes to the same assertion.

explain it away altogether. This change of front I first noticed about 1864 at Munich." Praeger did meet him at Munich "about 1864," i.e. in 1865; can there be the smallest doubt that when he began pestering Wagner once more anent the insurrection, the latter cut him short with a reference to Schmidt's attestation, and that *this* is what P. means when he speaks of his knowledge of "the present criminal official records in the procès-verbal Richard Wagner"? But he prefers to believe anybody, even that witness to whom he had "before alluded" (nine pages earlier) as one "who certainly will not be suspected of friendly feeling, viz. Count von Beust, the Saxon minister, who vigorously and unrelentingly persecuted the so-called revolutionist in 1849," rather than accept his friend's own word. And thus the whole story of Wagner's "minimizing," untrue in itself, is bolstered up by Praeger's greed for every morsel of exaggeration of a "part" on which he "cannot lay too much stress."—

Well, in 1892 neither Schmidt's attestation nor many another counter-proof had as yet been made public; so I had to grope my way unaided, and alone, among long-forgotten newspapers and contemporary chronicles in book-form. The result I embodied in a little brochure, "**1849**: *A Vindication*," which I will not now attempt to summarise, as its first (and only English) edition is still on sale, and therefore easy for the student to refer to. Not a material word have I to withdraw from that account, though several of its arguments might now be reinforced by more conclusive evidence; all I will single out for self-quotation is the following: "A Minister of State, pluming himself on the great act of grace he had committed in obtaining Wagner's pardon after thirteen years of exile, should have been the last person to divulge a fragment, even if it had been true, of the acts of accusation without giving the accused an opportunity of denial. This extraordinarily incredible conversation, however, is prefaced by von Beust with a statement that Wagner had BEEN CONDEMNED TO DEATH *in contumaciam* . . sufficient in itself to demolish the remainder of von Beust's account. And now I would ask my readers to refer back to page 16, where they will see a reference to a *journeyman-baker Wagner;* this young man *was* condemned to death for various acts of sedition, and is accused by Montbé of *incendiarism* (p. 269, *Der Mai-Aufstand*). Surely here is the key to the whole incident!"

That little brochure was published in July 1892, and this is what the late E. Dannreuther (Wagner's London host in 1877) wrote me on the 18th of the month: "The case against Praeger could not be more clearly made out. I find your sketch of the revolt and its causes *admirable*." The opinion of those who knew nothing of Wagner naturally differed from that of the gentleman whose brilliant monograph in *Grove* remains to this day one of the most universally

accredited of our works of reference. Thus, though the *Academy* reviewer of my brochure admitted I had "shown that some of Praeger's statements ought to be taken *cum grano salis*," the *Musical News* of July 29, 92, took superior "leave to express an opinion that Praeger's account of the doings of Wagner, with whom he had an intimate acquaintance, are much more likely to receive general acceptance, than the opinions of a writer whose knowledge of Wagner is second-hand and posthumous"; whilst the *Glasgow Herald* (still a believer in Praeger, 1905!) had come out the day previously with: "Mr Ellis has discovered in the records the case of a journeyman baker named Wagner, and ingeniously suggests that the historians may have confused his actions with those of Wagner, conductor of the Court Opera. Such a theory needs only to be stated."

Alas for Scotch acumen!—that identical theory was being propounded at that identical time, but altogether independently of myself, by a gentleman who *had* been given recent access to the "present criminal official records," and Dr Hugo Dinger of Dresden—whose large volume on *Richard Wagner's geistige Entwickelung* was published simultaneously with my little "**1849**" (our prefaces are both dated "June 1892")—clenches the argument with this official declaration of the Royal District-court of Dresden: "No manner of sentence on Königl. Kapellmeister Richard Wagner was ever passed. On the other hand, confectioner's-help Heinrich Woldemar Wagner of Dresden was examined in the criminal department of the Dresden Town-court, and condemned to death on March 18, 1850, by the Royal Court of Appeal, the verdict being High treason" (see vol. ii, 407-8, for fuller particulars).

That selfsame summer of 1892 a still more absorbing study stood before me—Praeger's German book "translated by the author from the English" made its first appearance at Bayreuth, during the Festival season, under the title *Wagner wie ich ihn kannte.* As the English original was also on sale there, a splendid opportunity thus presented itself for 'comparing notes' and verifying statements. Examples of the German "Praeger's" contradiction of its English twin have already been furnished in the present and preceding volumes, so that I need offer none here, but make straight for my account in the *Musical Standard* of 1894 (Feb. 24): "The most cursory examination at Bayreuth in the summer of 1892 convinced me of this—and also shewed me that the passages from Wagner's prose, even when given as avowed quotations, had absolutely gone through a double process of translation: namely, first into Praeger's English, then into Praeger's German! In a conversation on this matter with the editor of the *Bayreuther Blätter*, Freiherr Hans von Wolzogen (who, of course, had at once noticed it himself), he asked me to write a fairly long review of the German version, for publication in that paper later

on. At the same time I made the acquaintance of Mr Houston S. Chamberlain, an English resident in Vienna, who has given the German world some of the best essays yet written on the subject of Richard Wagner. He promised to render into German my forthcoming contribution. To cut a long story short, this culminated in a triple alliance, and from his own, from mine, and from Wolzogen's notes and criticisms Mr Chamberlain constructed an essay of forty pages, small type, occupying the whole of the July number of the *Bayreuther Blätter* for 1893. In that work he completely demolished the last atom of reliability in Praeger's book; though it would naturally require a large volume to deal with *every* question in detail. The only important point left to what one may call a moral certainty, was the alterations in [publisher's euphemism—*I* wrote "falsification of"] Wagner's letters to Praeger. To each of us three it had independently become clear, that these letters were certainly not *textually* reproduced in the German—that in fact they had passed through the same process of double translation as the passages cited by Praeger from Wagner's prose. That they had been meddled with, was obvious; for many of them differed widely in the English and German versions. One question alone remained for mere surmise—whether they *all* had even existed.

"This point I had already endeavoured to clear up in October, 1892; but through an unfortunate misunderstanding of the object of my inquiry—which, I believe, I omitted to state—the present owner of the letters declined to grant me permission to inspect them. Mr Chamberlain, however, has recently been more fortunate; and with the full assent of the owner he has published, with ten pages of lucid comment, the *originals* of twenty of the letters in 'Wagner as I knew him,' and of one (also to Praeger) not contained therein. These have appeared within the last few days, in the first quarterly number of the *Bayreuther Blätter*. To their discussion I must turn next week; meanwhile I may record the astounding fact that—as Mr Chamberlain remarks, and as anyone may prove for himself—*not one sentence* of the letters in 'Wagner wie ich ihn kannte' is given in Wagner's own words, and the very letters which have been singled out by the English and German press as special targets for its scorn are *nowhere to be found*."

Apropos of the last clause in the above, I may specify as chief of those undiscoverable letters the alleged "Minna" pair, its worser member dated "Mariafeld, April, 1864," commencing "And so she has written to you? Whose fault was it? How could she have expected I was to be shackled and fettered as any ordinary cold common mortal"—and ending, "I like comfort, luxury—she fettered me there —How will it end?"—in *As;* but in *Wie* (with no "Mariafeld" etc.) "Dear Praeger, so Minna has addressed herself to you; whose fault

is the whole incident? But why could she not comprehend that she ought not to argue [or "expostulate"—*rechten*] with me as with quite other individualities? Could I bind and chain myself like an ordinary philistine?", and ending "Nowhere an outlook, nor even any rest to find; where and how will it end?"—Now, as in the body of the present volume (pp. 70-8) I have shewn what transmogrifications Praeger was capable of perpetrating in his reproduction of a document that did exist, let me quote once more from my remarks in the *M. Standard* of 1894 (March 31) as to this couple of those that did not:—"When Mr Chamberlain called on me [in London] a few months ago, and told me the result of his inspection of the genuine letters, my first question was, 'What about the letters concerning Minna?' Upon his reply that 'they do not exist,' I shewed him my marginal notes to *Wagner wie ich ihn kannte:* against this Mariafeld letter I had written 'Suspiciously like a letter to Frau Wille, of beginning of June, '64,' and against the Starnberg letter ["Starnberg, June, 1864"], 'This looks like a *gross*—' the last word I cannot publicly repeat, but I may add that it was followed by references to parallel passages in Wagner's letters to Frau Wille of May, June, and September, 1864, whereof the letter of early June, however, *alone* refers to his wife. These letters of Wagner's to Frau Wille were published in the *Deutsche Rundschau* for March 1887, *i.e.* just five years before Praeger's *Wagner as I knew him* was published, and four and a half years before its author's death. More firmly than of anything in the world am I convinced that the 'Mariafeld' and the 'Starnberg' letters to Praeger were not written before the appearance of the *Deutsche Rundschau* of March 1887. I had thought of giving you the passages, not only from the letters of Wagner to Frau Wille, but also from *her own context*, so as to prove my words; but time presses, and, though prepared at any moment to adduce them, I here must limit myself to pointing your German-reading subscribers to the source itself. They will find half-sentences taken bodily (in both versions, though not *textually* in the German) from the Wille-letters,* and, where they deal with Minna Wagner, distorted into nothing less than an insult to Richard Wagner's name and memory . . . To Frau Wille, Wagner was writing as to a dear old Zurich friend, a woman who had just played the mother to him in his darkest days . . . While Wagner was at Mariafeld, the Willes' house . . . a letter arrived, bringing him payment from some theatre; he then told Frau Wille 'This overcomes my difficulties of yesterday,' the said difficulties being 'his duty to provide for Minna, amid all his financial embarrass-

* Since the year 1899 these letters to Frau Wille have been accessible to the English reader also, as they are included with my translation of the *Letters to Otto Wesendonck.*—1905 note.

ments.' The *conversation* which then passed between Frau Wille and her guest (apart from this financial question) has been incorporated in Praeger's 'Mariafeld' letter! Beyond that, Wagner wrote to Frau Wille the letter of June '64, already alluded to; he there speaks at length of his wife,* but in terms of terrible seriousness, and, mind you, to a *woman.* There is none of that revolting pettiness and pettishness which Praeger puts into his mouth, but some suggestion of Frau Wille's in a letter (not given) to which this is evidently a reply, or perchance some fresh newspaper attack, has made him once, and once for all, unbosom himself to a woman who could understand him. Are we to imagine for a moment, that he would keep harping on this theme to a *man* he knew so little? But we need no longer discuss the matter; the 'Mariafeld' and 'Starnberg' letters bear their legend stamped upon their double front.—Yet one word more. On September 9, 1864, Wagner wrote to Frau Wille: 'Thus was I already abandoned [*i.e.*, before May 1864] by *all my old friends:*—really *you* alone still believed in me.'"

In other of the fourteen letters (plus a few stray fragments in the text) which in my series of articles in the *M. Standard* Feb. 24 to April 7, 1894, I termed the "problematic,"—in other of these problematic letters, then, I shewed the direct conflict of their supposititious dates or contents with contemporary events, a point on which I still shall have something to say in a future volume; but when all is said, the *onus probandi* must rest on the shoulders of the person who issues such alleged documents, above all if for the first half of an extant autograph a pure and proved invention has been substituted (in the case of that letter of Jan. 8, 55). These "letters" must forever remain under the heaviest cloud of suspicion until they are *proven* to exist, or to have once existed, not only in substance, but also—allowing generously for carelessness of transcription—in material form.—

You might suppose the story ends here; but the most exciting part of it has yet to come.

At the end of my first article in the *M. Standard* I had remarked, "the very letters which have been singled out by the English and German press as special targets for its scorn are *nowhere to be found.*" In my fifth article, Mar. 24, 94,—speaking of the opening of Praeger's cap. XXII., "From the time I left Zurich in the autumn of 1856 [i.e. 1857] to the untoward fate of 'Tannhäuser,' at Paris, in March, 1861" —I observed: "He tells us (page 300, Eng.): 'Of the several letters which passed between Richard Wagner and me, I reproduce the few following, as possessing more than a personal interest.' So that we

* In the light of to-day it is even probable that all but one sentence of this is a reproach directed against Mathilde Wesendonck; which would still further strengthen my case.—1905 note.

are given to understand that not only did there once exist fourteen letters (and a few fragments) beyond those whose originals we now possess, but a considerable number *more*. As no single letter of Wagner's to Ferdinand Praeger, however—apart from those twenty-and-one now owned by * *—has been heard of in the world outside, and as none exist in the present possession of his family, we should be driven to the conclusion that a wholesale destruction of very valuable autographs had taken place, were there no alternative among our premisses." My statement that "none exist in the present possession of his family" was founded on Mr H. S. Chamberlain's report (*Bayr. Bl.* Feb. '94) of an interview he had been accorded by Mme Praeger towards the end of 1893 in London ; my astonishment therefore was great when that lady herself replied in the *M. Std* of April 21, 94, with the following allusion to the said visit of Mr Chamberlain, who, she says, "talked 'Wagner,' and, among other things, asked me if I had any letters of Wagner. I answered 'No,' which at the time was my firm belief, and I added that shortly before his death Mr Praeger himself destroyed all his papers, among them some of Wagner's letters. To this I shall refer in connection with a particular letter later on [no such reference appears].

"This interview was about the end of November last, I think—anyhow it was before Christmas. But, on the 18th of February last, I was . . making room for the storing of a flower-stand. To do this I had to remove some lumber, when, by the merest accident, I came upon a bundle of books and newspapers, in the midst of which was a small wooden box. On opening the box I found it contained letters, and to my surprise one in Wagner's handwriting. I thereupon called my son . . and together we went through the box, finding no less than sixteen letters from Richard Wagner, besides some from Berlioz, Bülow, Liszt, and others. No doubt some of these Wagner letters are those which Mr Praeger refers to in his book (p. 300) as having been received by him, but which he did not elect to reproduce. Of course Mr Ellis has singled out this reference and bluntly suggested that it was an untruth on the part of Ferdinand Praeger. The whole of these letters I then sent to total strangers for translation. The letters and translations are now with me. Briefly, they relate to money matters, copyright, Minna, projected concerts in London, his Zurich neighbour, etc., etc." *

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* In proof of their genuineness, these letters were subsequently produced, at Mme Praeger's house, to the editor of the *M. Standard* and a gentleman representing myself (W. A. E.—I could sympathise with the lady's desire not to meet me in person) ; but all which these gentlemen were able to testify, was that the letters had every appearance of being in Wagner's handwriting ; for they were not permitted to handle them, and no opportunity was afforded of

Now, as remarked in my rejoinder to this point, since Mme Praeger's discovery was made *six days before* the appearance of my first article in the *M. Std*, it became her immediate "plain duty to inform either Mr Chamberlain, myself, or yourself, Mr Editor; and thus, for all she knew, to *modify* a series of criticisms only just begun." In fact, for her late husband's sake it would have been the very wisest course, simply to have written that editor to this effect: I have just discovered 16 letters of Wagner's which I had believed to have been destroyed. Had she done so, I do not see how I *could* have pursued my critique, pending fuller particulars. But it was allowed to run through seven weekly parts without a warning word. Even at the end of that time I think Mme Praeger would have been better advised not to afford *any* clue to the contents of the letters, unless she gave a précis of the whole fifteen addressed to her husband (one, she tells us, was written to herself). She preferred to print a catalogue of their modes of address, "Mein lieber Freund" and so on, and to inform us that eleven of these letters (unspecified) are *dated*—whereas Praeger himself gave us complete dates for only two out of his 'problematic' series ("June 1864" is not the sort of date a *sender* uses). On the other hand, by publishing two of these letters in full and the date of a third ("Paris, 6th Dec. 1859, Dearest Friend"), she enabled me, in conjunction with the numbered modes of address, to clear off either nine or twelve of her list by December 1859—a more than ample allowance for those her husband "did not elect to reproduce"—leaving only three or six to account for all the missing letters from 1860 onward, whereas the book has ten 'problematics' from Feb. 1861 to July 1870. Further, the two genuine letters which she reproduced at length in the *M. Std* (May 5) ocularly demonstrate the supposed extract from one of them on p. 299 of *As I* to be nothing but moonshine.* Taking all in all, then, and in particular the tacit admission that these are *not* the letters we impugned, this fresh discovery had made matters still worse for the genuineness of the problematic series, though it might offer some extenuating circumstance for F. Praeger himself—in this way:—

In that "small wooden box" and its contents—so far as divulged—

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ascertaining even their *dates*, to say nothing of their contents. However, as "Minna" is included by Mme Praeger in her list of topics, it is of moment to learn from the lady to whom I shall hereafter refer as one of those "total strangers," that "the genuineness of these letters cannot be disputed . . . Very lovingly writes Wagner of his first wife, Minna Planer, in these valuable documents" (*Mus. Courier*, New York, June 26, 95). In itself that disposes of all possibility of their being the originals of the "Minna" apocrypha in Praeger's book.

* With this fresh pair of genuine letters—touching French copyright, among other things—I shall deal at length when I reach the winter 1857-8, i.e. next volume.

I implicitly believe; in fact I welcomed the discovery so soon as ever we were admitted to a partial share in it, for it inspired me with a valuable hypothesis, the which, as it has long since been accepted by all qualified to judge, I will repeat in my words of 1894 (*M. Std*, May 12): "Mme Praeger does not inform us *how long* those letters had been lost, but it is obvious that at least at the time when her late husband wrote his English book they were not under his eye; otherwise he could never have so confounded events of 1857 with events of 1859. Evidently he trusted to his memory with regard to this letter [of Jan. '58], and the question at once arises: Did he not trust to his memory, also, for not only the dates, but also the *contents*, of the whole (or certainly a large portion) of the 'problematic' series? There is a singular resemblance between the numbers, namely 14 plus 2 fragments, in the book, and 16 (including the one to his widow) now re-discovered. I only advance this as an unadulterated theory, but it would account at once for the extraordinary improbabilities and impossibilities contained in that 'problematic' series, and would also minimise, to some extent, the else so obvious conclusion that the 'problematic' letters are for the most part pure inventions. Having temporarily lost the original letters (on this theory), it might easily occur to a man, who did not hesitate to give *his own German* in place of Wagner's, to print his *recollections* of those letters as the genuine things themselves. I advance this as a theory, and one or two people to whom I have mentioned it, consider it the most in consonance with all the facts; but, should it prove correct, what credence can be given to any particular sentence in the 'problematic' series, and what guarantee have we that even the *years* of the supposititious dates are rightly given? We have seen the year of the copyright-letter [Dec. '57] reported falsely, beyond all dispute; we have further seen that, even with this re-discovered collection, the letters fall mostly into groups; is it not, then, most highly presumable that Praeger should have distributed the merely *remembered* letters as milestones along his autobiographic road? Almost all their inconsistencies would be explained on this hypothesis, and though his reliability would not thereby be raised to a higher rank, yet there would be removed a portion of the stigma of pure invention."

The late Mme Praeger's second, and seemingly more dangerous hit must wait until Mr H. S. Chamberlain himself has had an innings; since his letter to the *M. Std* of May 5 appeared in the selfsame issue, i.e. was written in reply to a minor charge of Mme P.'s concerning Mr C.'s enquiry of Edward Roeckel as to Wagner's now-celebrated letter of 1851 to that gentleman. "I enclose a copy of my letter to Mr. E. Roeckel"—writes Mr Chamberlain to the Editor of the *M. Std*—"the gist will suffice for your readers: 'having proved beyond question that the letters in Praeger's book purporting to be

from Wagner to the author are not published in their original shape, but have certainly *been touched up*, I conjecture the same of the letter to you, and therefore beg you for a copy.' Mr E. Roeckel thereupon very kindly furnished me with a copy,* and I was thus enabled to establish that, although this letter has not been altered to the same extent as those to Praeger, the two or three words necessary to make it not only fit into, but back up Praeger's imaginary account of the events of May 1849 *have been altered*, and that, in the absurd process of retranslating back into German, these apparently trifling modifications have been pushed still farther in the same sense. Thus my conviction that this letter had been tampered with, was shown to be fully justified (see *Bayreuther Blätter*, Feb. '94)."

Mr. Chamberlain then goes into the "revolutionary" question, with which I have sufficiently dealt already. From that he returns to our falsification theme: "Praeger's 'Wagner as I knew him' contains some thirty odd letters purporting to be letters from Wagner. If it can be shown that *one only* of these letters has been tampered with, and that Wagner is thus forced, in a manner, to bear witness against himself, I imagine that there is not one man, woman or child in the United Kingdom, whose opinion about the value of Praeger's word will not be once and for ever settled. Now, there are two modes of testing the genuineness of historical or other documents, when we are not able to get at the original documents themselves (see Macaulay, etc.); we may either compare them with other testimonies and with established facts of history—this is the external evidence; or we may examine their 'intrinsic' value, and by a minute analysis endeavour to establish the degree of authenticity that may be attributed to them. By strictly adhering to these two scientific methods, I proved irrefutably, long before I knew that I should ever see the originals, that the letters contained in F. Praeger's book could not possibly be literal, verbatim copies (or translations) of Wagner's original letters, as they purported to be. This result I published in a German Review, last summer (*Bayreuther Blätter* for July 1893). The proofs adduced by me are so stringent, that the principal German papers, from the *Hamburger Nachrichten* in the extreme north, to the *Grazer Tagblatt* in the extreme south, all admitted that there was no possibility of their being gainsaid. Six months after this article had been in the editor's hands, I profited of an unforeseen trip to England to hunt up the original letters; I did not succeed in finding them all, but, thanks to the courteousness of a friend, I was able to examine and to take verbatim copies of two-thirds of them, and as I am well acquainted

* What the Roeckel family thought of Mr Chamberlain may be inferred from the fact that, a year or two later, they got him to write a preface to the English translation of Wagner's letters to August Roeckel.

with Wagner's handwriting and moreover many of the letters were in their envelopes, I can testify to their being the genuine, original letters from Wagner to Praeger. These original letters have now been published (February, 1894) and all discussion has henceforth become superfluous, as anybody need but compare the original text with that of the letters in Praeger's book, to see that scarcely a single sentence corresponds exactly in the two. The plea of 'error of translation' is of no help whatever, as whole long passages are interpolated, of which not one word is contained in the original, others are cut out, and yet others altered in a manner that makes Wagner express the contrary of what he said, or something quite different. (Quite apart from the fact that in the German edition there is sometimes not one sentence of the 'translation' which corresponds even in a distant manner to the English text!) Nor can anyone be blamed for considering it a remarkable coincidence, that the fourteen letters not forthcoming are precisely those in which simply incredible statements are attributed to Wagner, or statements which flatly contradict established facts and dates. All discussion has therefore, as I said, now become superfluous. The question as to the authenticity of these letters is no longer an open one. And twenty private letters which have all been gravely tampered with, will suffice to convince any reasonable person that Praeger's testimony can not be trusted; *falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus.* Further evidence may be gleaned from every page of his book, especially from his description of the revolution in Dresden, 1849, which is one mass of inaccurate and false statements, and in the course of which Praeger has even gone the length of tampering with the text of a published book, his own friend's, August Roeckel's 'Sachsen's Erhebung,' in order to secure Roeckel's testimony in favour of a story which is entirely a child of his (Praeger's) imagination; to accomplish this feat he attributes words to Roeckel which are the mathematically precise contrary of what Roeckel wrote!

"It is impossible to advance a single word against these facts; there the documents all are, black on white: Wagner's original letters, the Dresden law-court reports, August Roeckel's book, and numerous other documents not alluded to in these short lines. To heap abuse on Ellis and myself is simply to throw dust in the eyes of the public; and as for the fable of the 'Bayreuth Conspiracy,' it loses the slight shadow of possibility which it might perchance possess in some people's eyes, by the fact that Wilhelm Tappert, the celebrated Berlin professor, and perhaps the greatest authority after Glasenapp on Wagner's life, has come to precisely the same conclusion as we have, and published it *—only that he wisely refrained from entering

* *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* Oct 1, 1892—i.e. nine months before publication of the composite article in the *Bayr. Bl.* of '93. Here are a few specimens

into details, saying that 'he could not afford to lose his time over such trash'; and Tappert lives at daggers drawn with Bayreuth and never loses an opportunity of attacking the present direction of the 'Festspiele.' All further discussion, and all chatter about details, is mere waste of time.—Having done my duty by Wagner, I shall leave attacks on my person unanswered.—Yours etc., HOUSTON S. CHAMBERLAIN. Vienna. April 23rd, 1894."

Though agreeing entirely with what friend Chamberlain then said, save for a few too trenchant generalisations, I could wish he had not quoted that unfortunate Latin proverb; proverbs are mostly too sweeping, and Latin proverbs more often than others. To pin your faith to one sole proof, may prove disastrous, and of course Mr Chamberlain had done nothing of the kind; but our adversaries (here I advisedly use the plural) did, to most unpleasant purpose. There was one little chink in our armour—our personal armour, mind you, not in that of our cause. Noticing that a certain "Bumpus" was spoken of in the Praeger versions of one of Wagner's letters, but did not appear in the *B. Bl.* reproduction of the original German; noticing also that this "Bumpus" was mentioned, in the same connection with Lüders, in a letter to Sainton of the same period, which letter had been printed in the *Musical World* of July 1888 on the same page with that letter of Praeger's in which he first laid English claim to the importation of Wagner (p. 46 *sup.*)—I made my only awkward mistake in the conduct of a highly complex case: I too hastily assumed that Praeger had "*conveyed*" this particular sentence "*after* the time at which he says his book was written, and *after* Wagner's original letters had left his possession" (*M. Std*, March 3, '94). This "purely puerile addition," as I then dubbed it, I immediately capped with another: "In the letter of July 7, '55, one reads, according to the English version: 'In a few days you will receive a box with three medallions in plaster of Paris. These were modelled by the daughter of "the Princess Lichtenstein," and are to be divided thus,' etc. The words from 'modelled' to 'Lichtenstein' exist nowhere in Wagner's letters to Praeger, but do exist in the letters of *Liszt* to Wagner—with the trifling exception, that the Princess's name is Wittgenstein. What the inverted commas may mean for that lady, I am at a loss to

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from Tappert: "Most of what Praeger cites is totally false. . . . It is no amusement to dwell on all the nonsense this book contains. We here have to do with the wearisome garrulity of an infirm old man who gives himself airs because he once was acquainted with the 'celebrated Wagner.' . . . So far as my knowledge goes, the misbegotten opus has been universally condemned; of course with individual exceptions, as there will always be those who delight in saying something singular" (W. A. E., 1905).

divine ;* but they have disappeared by the time the letter gets reincarnated ; they have left their chrysalis state and evolved into 'and are tolerably like me.'"

Well, if one wanted a playful designation for this sort of thing, "Lichtensteinism" would be far too cumbrous ; so I unluckily chose the wrong turning, and coined the word "Bumpism," which I cheerily adopted for three or four of the less important apocrypha—the name "Bumpus," that of a very excellent bookseller (to whom I tender apologies), having caught my fancy, just as it had tickled Wagner's when he passed the shop. The consequences, as said, were temporarily most unpleasant ; an unsuspected chink had been exposed, and Madame was quick to espy it. This formed, in fact, her only real opening for counter-attack ; so let me invite her to a personal hearing, though she does say nasty things about me (*M. Std*, May 5, '94) :—

"I now come to the most serious [!] of Mr Ellis's allegations—'Bumpism.' It is the pivot upon which the whole of his charges turn [! !]. When he wishes to dispose of a piece of evidence objectionable to his set view he begs the reader to remember that we are dealing with a gentleman who has not scrupled to invent and add to Wagner's letters [I rightly used the *plural*]. I do not wish to minimise the offence ; therefore Mr Ellis shall state his case in his own words [no need for me to repeat them—W. A. E.] . . . Now what will be said when I state that *Bumpus does exist in the original letter of Wagner of March 28th*, 1856, and that Mr Ellis's assertion that it does not is nothing less than a gross and malicious slander !—And how do I know so positively that the phrase does exist? Because this letter has been recently seen by my son, with the result that I can assure anyone, who may

* Since the body of Praeger's text does not evince familiarity with the Wagner-Liszt Correspondence—published in German toward the end of 1887, Eng. summer 1888—I now should guess this interpolation to be of somewhat later date, as in the case of the Sainton footnote fifty pages earlier. Perhaps he originally intended it for a mere personal comment between brackets, which the printer of the English book has mistaken for inverted commas ; but the German addition "*und mir ziemlich ähnlich*" is only explicable by P.'s own passion for high-handed embellishment : a Praeger comment has been promoted, in his peculiar process of retro-translation, to the direct semblance of a Wagner clause. Liszt writes Wagner in May 1854 : "Eugène Wittgenstein has sent me your medallion, which has given me great pleasure. It is the most faithful likeness of all your portraits" ; Praeger inwardly turns the male cousin into a fictitious "daughter" Eugénie. The point is of interest as a faint clue to the dating of various portions of the inaccessible Praeger MSS. ; though the possibility must not be lost sight of, that Wagner himself may have told P. the history of the medallion by word of mouth, two years after this letter, when P. paid his visit to the Asyl.—1905 note.

obtain permission from the present possessor of it, that he will find the sentence, and prove to his own satisfaction that Mr Chamberlain has omitted it in his copy. The letter in question is written closely on four sides of a mauve-tinted sheet of paper and the sentence referred to is written in a position as to escape nobody's notice. When I read Mr Ellis's insolent charge that Mr Praeger had '*conveyed*' it from a letter of 1888, I knew it to be false, because *Wagner as I knew him* had left Mr Praeger's hands long before.—Who is the author of the *real Bumpism*, Mr Ellis or Mr Chamberlain, or both, I care not. The one guaranteed [?] the *faithfulness* of the copies of the other . . . Mr Chamberlain made 'faithful copies.' Did he?" (and so on: tho' I have immortalised some of the lady's scolding of myself, for my penance, I don't see why I should drag up Chamberlain to sit beside me on the stool).

Now, that of course was a serious affair, and the more so as I had had to keep silence for a whole fortnight from the time when Mme Praeger had been allowed by a too lenient editor to commence her so-called *Reply* to me with an italicised and unsubstantiated accusation of "*wilful untruth* either on his [i.e. my] part or on that of his fellow 'conspirator,' Mr Chamberlain." To myself it was at once apparent that the lady had solid ground for her statement of *fact*, in this particular case, though there was an ugly look about the inferential "Did he?" Some slip had clearly been committed by my friend; unwittingly I had made it worse; and the whole case, in so far as it rested on the copies of those one-and-twenty letters, was imperilled in the eyes of unreflecting readers.—However, in the issue of May 12 I was able to commence my *Rejoinder* (after a few preliminary remarks) with the following deposition, which, long as it is, I am bound to reproduce in defence of Mr Chamberlain almost more than of myself:—

"I am in duty bound to give precedence to the 'Bumpus Letter.' Before even entering on its discussion, I shall tender to Madame Praeger an apology for having in *this* instance been unjust—albeit unwittingly—to her late husband. In self-defence, however, I must promptly add that the probabilities were enormously *against* the existence of that phrase in the original letter. Consider the position: On the one hand I was dealing with a reproduction issued under the auspices of two gentlemen, Mr Chamberlain and the Editor of that German paper, whom I knew to be the most punctilious observers of *accuracy;* on the other, with a writer who (quite aside from that recent reproduction) had not scrupled to interpolate his own name into a letter from Wagner to Fischer, and that of August Roeckel into a passage from Wagner's prose which every German student might verify at once—to say nothing of his having given totally divergent versions of certain letters, in the two different castings of his book. Moreover the position, which Praeger had given to the phrase, appeared to preclude all possibility

of its having been omitted in the *Bayreuther Blätter* version. Under these circumstances, I think you will agree that every rational critic in the world would have accepted the view I took of the phrase. *But*, I was wrong, and young Mr Praeger may be congratulated on having discovered the existence of 'Bumpus' in Wagner's letter of March 28, 1856, to his father. I only wish that he had extended his report to other letters, besides this one; but I must not anticipate.

"You now have heard from Mme Praeger a description of the letter in question; with its general correctness I entirely agree, but I must take the strongest exception to her opinion that this particular phrase 'is written in a position as to escape nobody's notice,' especially in view of her succeeding comments on my friend, Mr Chamberlain. For I, also, have seen this letter, within the last few days (more, I will tell you presently), and I must say at once that the phrase occurs in a position extremely likely to be overlooked by anyone who was not merely inspecting, but *copying* it. The letter *is* 'written closely on four sides of a mauve-tinted sheet of paper,' the signature 'Deinen R. W.' occurring at quite the bottom of the fourth page; then comes a postscript: 'Und deine liebe Frau grüsse allerherzlichst von mir: sie soll fortfahren, mich in gutem Andenken zu pflegen. Glück und Gedeihen unsren Kindern!! Adieu!' written on the left-hand margin of the first (the front) page. Finally comes the now celebrated 'Bumpus' passage: 'Grüsse den armen Lüders tausendmal von mir: bald werde ich mich durch ihn genau nach Bumpus erkündigen,' *i.e.* 'Greet poor Lüders a thousand times from me; I shall soon ask him for precise news of Bumpus' (as to the 'mich durch' I would not care to swear, since they were somewhat illegible, but the 'ihn' is unmistakable). This final postscript is written *vertically* (like its predecessor) on the narrow left-hand margin of the *third* page of the letter, *i.e.*, in a position almost certain to be overlooked by a copyist. Let me explain: on reading through the letter, of course the phrase would be obvious, and at once arrest attention, but it could not be copied down there and then—it must wait till the *whole* letter had been transcribed; so soon as this had been effected, then would come the turn for the postscripts, and after writing down the first, with its terminal 'Adieu!' any person might easily forget that there had really been a second, and that on the *inside* double of the page. I hope I have made this clear, but without a facsimile, it is difficult to convey the exact configuration of the passage. Naturally you will understand that this is purely my own explanation, and is based on the *hypothesis* that Mr Chamberlain overlooked the passage when copying; on the other hand, it may have been an error on the part of the printers of the *Bayreuther Blätter* (Feb. '94).* In either case it was a slip of the most innocent

* Note to my article of May 12, 1894: "Since writing the above, Mr

character, and I have to take upon my own shoulders the entire blame for having elevated 'Bumpus' to a question of importance; for Mr Chamberlain did not even allude to him in his comments accompanying the reproduction of the original letters.

"I will therefore return to *my* part of the blunder. As said above, I could not conceive how a whole phrase could have been overlooked, between the words 'Kindern' and 'Adieu'; and here I was right, for Praeger's incorrigible habit of *methodising* Wagner had made him drag down the word 'Adieu' to the foot of the letter, adorn it with another pendant in the shape of initials, 'R. W.,' which had really occurred above (in the place where he gives the full signature), and finally round the whole thing off with a date which Wagner had written at the *top* of his letter. These trifling changes had already been of so complicated a nature, that anyone might be excused for believing that the 'Bumpus' phrase itself had existed nowhere but in the letter to Sainton, particularly in view of the remarkable coincidence to which I referred when first introducing 'Bumpus' to your notice, and which Madame Praeger has now recalled to your memory. But this lady considers it my 'most serious allegation'; on this point I beg most emphatically to differ, and can only wish that her sense of *proportion* had been a little more manifest—for my most serious allegation, 'the pivot upon which the whole of my charges turn' (from February 1894 and onwards) will be found [situation of "Philharmonic letter" charge] in your issue for March the 10th."

I next repeated my apologies to Madame Praeger on this unlucky point; also for having questioned her husband's receipt of Wagner's wedding-card of 1870 (on which Mr C. had not even touched), which had since been produced but with its phraseology differing largely, as usual, from that in *Wie* (another retro-translation). Having *no* other errors to admit, and reserving a lapful of minor objections and casuistries of the other side for refutation in a "Schedule of Small Things" at the close, I passed to that "wooden box" and my theory already-quoted anent its contents. Then came my conclusion for that week, to which I must once more beg my present readers' most serious attention: "On Wednesday last week—after hearing from yourself [i.e. the editor *M. Std*] that the 'Bumpus' phrase did really exist in the letter of March 28th, '56, and upon your request that I should, if possible, inspect this and the other original letters—I took a journey for that purpose. The owner of the letters is at present on the high seas, but one of his two 'attorneys,' upon hearing the grave nature of my visit, permitted me to verify for myself the

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Chamberlain's original MS. copy has been kindly forwarded me at *his* request; it now is evident that the oversight was his, and must have occurred in the manner above-suggested.—W. A. E."

phrase I have dealt with earlier in this article; he then allowed me to select one other letter as a proof for or against Mr Chamberlain's accuracy—more than one letter, in the owner's absence, he did not feel justified in allowing me to examine. You may easily guess *which* letter I selected for the purpose: the first 'Philharmonic.'

"This gentleman took into his hands a printed copy of the *Bayreuther Blätter* (February 1894), while I read to him slowly the original letter of Richard Wagner's; word by word, comma by comma, bracket by bracket, and dash by dash, did we go through this main foundation of my indictment—and in not the minutest particular did the original differ from the copy as printed in that journal (a portion of which you will find reprinted in your issue of March 10th). I shall not readily forget that moment; for the first time did I fully realise what I may almost call the 'blasphemy' of its deliberate perversion in *Wagner as I knew him*, and I now can sympathize with Mr Chamberlain when he tells me that he almost had a fit of apoplexy in getting through his task of copying down these letters for the eventual purpose of giving the world *what Wagner really wrote*. To resume my story, however, I gave the owner's attorney an undertaking not to make any use of my information until he should have obtained for me the permission of his colleague. That permission I received last Saturday, and with it the relief from the heaviest mental load I have ever suffered under. I now can safely say that, in all human probability, the 'Bumpus' oversight is the *only* inaccuracy in all this recent reproduction. What that means, your readers will see at once. Before closing for this week, however, I must ask why Mme Praeger did not direct her son's attention to the charge whose proving condemns to ashes the whole of *Wagner as I knew him?*"

In the second instalment of my *Rejoinder* (May 19, 94) I dealt at some length with the re-discovered letters produced or adumbrated by the other side, and with the question of Wagner's other London friends. From this part I now need only cite the following: "As *Wagner as I knew him* mainly consists of trifles strung together, it is all-important that we should test by a specimen or two the general trustworthiness of the biography. If Ferdinand Praeger's account breaks down in that portion of his book (pages 218 to 267) which records his only protracted intercourse with Richard Wagner, and at a time when there would have been ample opportunity for taking notes, or keeping a diary, what *are* we to say about his recital of events supposed to have taken place during a few flying visits? I therefore proceed to Carl (now Dr) Klindworth.* . . . I like to get

* Referring to a previous paragraph of mine, the split infinitives whereof now shock me (one lesson I have learnt from my critics): "Is it a trifle, for

all the evidence I can, on any given point; so I asked a head of one of our largest pianoforte firms to write to Dr Klindworth (at Berlin) for an answer to one simple question: Who introduced you to Wagner? Very kindly this gentleman wrote to Dr Klindworth for me, and the latter replied direct to myself on the 5th inst., in *English*, as follows: 'Mr X writes me that you would like to hear from me, who introduced me to Wagner. I am pleased to tell you: Franz Liszt. Being his pupil from 1852 to 54, he had several times mentioned my name and doings to Wagner before the latter came to London [cf. cap. III.]. For this event he wrote him a special letter to introduce me and when Wagner arrived in London *he* came at once to me (9 Manchester St.) to make my personal acquaintance. (What Praeger relates is utterly untruth). Yours' etc., etc. The brackets and italics are Dr Klindworth's own."

The third and final instalment of my *Rejoinder* (May 26, 94) dealt first with the attempted rehabilitation of the Philharmonic myth and with the Letter of 1851 (to Edward Roeckel), from which I proceeded to the *history* of F. Praeger's twin books as furnished us in his widow's *Reply*. If for nothing else—and indeed it was some relief to think that her two minor victories already-related must have eased the pain I had been unable to avoid inflicting on her as her husband's widow—if for nothing else, then, I was glad my original series of articles had at last elicited a modicum of information as to the actual writing of that pair of books. Hardly hoping for an answer from anybody, I had asked Apr. 7: "Why was its preface dated 'London, 15th June, 1885,' and in the German, 'London, 14th January, 1885'? Why was there no intimation that the German version was not a mere 'translation,' but a re-casting, of the English; and, if the German was really not completed until just before the author's death, why was there no new, no posterior date affixed? Why were both books kept back until the author had departed this life? If because the biography was not completed till about that time, then: Why did it take six years to *remember* all its contents?—Was the English book in type before the author's death? If not, who corrected the proofs; and who devised the headlines, such as 'A convenient memory,' which must certainly have been strewn-in after the type was set up?

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instance, to falsely report the introduction of one friend to another, and in such a way as to invariably take the credit to oneself? If A said that B introduced C to D, and we discovered afterwards that it was really E who had done it, we should merely say that A's statements could not be depended on: but if A persistently said that it was himself in *all* such cases, then we should have to regard the matter far more seriously. And that is just the present case. I will first take Berlioz [see cap. VI., present vol.], then Klindworth, and finally the Philharmonic Society—which is really only a larger variety of the same genus."

Why was the French version never published? Again:—Was there a diary kept, or even a note-book; and on what evidence do the reported conversations rest? Why, once more, did the author not take copies of the verifiable letters before their sale; and why not, afterwards?—These unanswered, and perhaps never to be answered, questions will afford a glimpse into the chaos of this *Wagner as Mr Praeger knew him.*"

As I need scarcely say, these questions were *not* addressed to Madame Praeger—I should have expected a masculine representative of the book to answer them, if anybody—wherefore they were couched in a rather provocative form. The more pleasantly was I surprised that the lady addressed herself to some of them (altogether neglecting the "diary, or even a note-book") in perfectly temperate and partly informative terms, as follows:—"I know more about the composition of 'Wagner as I knew him' than any one living.

"The facts are briefly these:—About a year after the death of Wagner, Mr Praeger was commissioned to write 'Wagner as I knew him' in English. That occupied in all about two years, leaving Mr Praeger's hands at once and for good, having been despatched, as written, to its purchaser. Mr Ellis will see the force of this statement since it disposes of several of his insinuations. When the work was in its owner's possession he desired to have some of the original letters . . [Mme P. here goes into the transfer of the 21 letters to "T. O."]

"Shortly after the English had been completed and some of the letters had been parted with [those 21], Mr Praeger, at the wish of the owner of the English manuscript, prepared a German edition, while I prepared one in French.

"First, as regards the English: The copy made for the owner, which I presume he sent to the publishers, is in my handwriting, as is also the original English now in my possession and from which the translations were made. As regards the French, the copy made for the owner is in my handwriting as well as the original now in my possession.

"Coming to the German, Mr Praeger, having about him no one who knew German, was his own translator, whether from the English into German, or originally from German (Wagner's letters) into English. He did it all himself, and the copy sent to the owner and from which I presume the German printers set up the type is in his handwriting, the *only* copy ever existing.

"Mr Ellis further asks, 'Was the English book in type before the author's death?' No, certainly not. 'If not, who corrected the proofs; and who devised the headlines, etc.' I should say only the publishers could answer this. Most assuredly Mr Praeger's family *never saw any proofs*, and, strange though it may seem to Mr Ellis, only knew of its publication by seeing press announcements of it, and by subsequently receiving a presentation copy through the

courtesy of the publishers. Precisely similar remarks apply to the German edition, with the exception that no presentation copy was sent to me. Indeed, up to the present day I have not even seen a copy of the German edition.

"'Why was the French version never published?' again asks Mr Ellis. That can only be answered by its owner.

"'Why were both books (English and German) kept back until the author had departed this life?' is another query by Mr Ellis. To this as to the above I can only answer, 'their owner alone knows.' He had had both manuscripts in his possession *years* before they were issued to the public." N.B. Mme Praeger's excuse as to no verbatim copies having been taken of the verifiable letters, for the German book, will be found on pages 76-7 *supra*.

Now, although much useful information is certainly comprised in the above, Mme Praeger's memory must unfortunately have deceived her in the vital matter of dates, unless both English and German manuscripts were returned to her husband for later revision; the only alternative being that their text was altered by somebody else while in The Owner's possession—which, in view of his social rank, is quite out of the question—or by two different publishers at opposite sides of the earth—which is absurd. To that important matter of dates I therefore addressed myself in the said third instalment of my *Rejoinder*:—

"Richard Wagner died on February 13th, 1883: that 'about a year after' must therefore be stretched to either the 15th June, 1885, the date of the English, or 14th January, 1885, the date of the German preface. I will give the benefit of a double misprint to the English (or rather, the American-typed) book, and will take 'London, 14th January, 1885,' *i.e.* within a month of *two* years after Wagner's death, as the date of commencement.—'Stay! Prefaces are generally written *after* a work is completed,' you may object. Not so, in this instance: in the first place the whole tone of this preface is that of a task just commencing;* in the second, two considerably later dates are mentioned towards the close of the volume . . namely page 289, 'In his [*i.e.* Count Beust's] autobiography, published the latter end of 1886'; to this is appended a footnote:—'An English translation of these memoirs by Baron de Worms was published in 1887.' I may tell you that von Beust died October 24th, 1886; that the German original of his book . . bears on its title-page the date '1887'; that

* For example, "He had his failings, which will be fearlessly dealt with," "these preliminary remarks . . indicative of the manner in which I propose to treat my friend's life and work," "Therefore shall I tell the story of his life and work," "It is with deep affection that I undertake a work prompted," etc.—1905 note.

its publishers (Cotta) inform me that it was issued at the end of January, 1887 . . that Baron de Worms' preface to the only English translation is dated 'March, 1887'; and finally that . . on page 298 (Eng.) . . our author refers to it by its *English* title, which is totally different from its German. So that, beyond all dispute, Praeger was engaged on his English manuscript at least as late as *April or May* 1887—*i.e.* over *four* years after Wagner's death. There is *no* getting away from these dates, and they refer to an integral portion of the text of *Wagner as I knew him*,—to say nothing of the footnote.

"One of the 'insinuations' to which his widow obviously refers, namely my next-door-to-proof that two or three of the 'problematic' Wagner letters are founded on letters of Wagner as published by Frau Wille in the *Deutsche Rundschau* for March, 1887, is thus the very reverse of 'disposed of.' As far as dates go, it is brought home to the very time at which this chapter was being written; and all I can say is, that if Chapter xxi of *Wagner as I knew him* was *not* being written in the spring of 1887, it was being either written, or retouched, at a *later* date: the reference to Beust's book simply *could not* have been made earlier!

"But we have a still later date supplied us in *Wagner as I knew him*. On page 218 there is a reference to Sainton: 'He was and is an intimate friend of mine,' and to this is appended a footnote: 'Written before his death in 1890.' The book's publishers tell me that they consider it 'most unlikely' that this footnote was written by anyone in the employment of their firm; I quite agree with them, for the *German* version entirely drops the 'is' and speaks of Sainton throughout in the *past* tense. Sainton died on October 17, 1890; so that we are forced to the conclusion that something was being done to both the English and the German manuscripts *less* than a year before their author's death. The fact of these dates existing in the English book was in my mind, when I wrote (March 31st) that 'the German version of the book appears to have been barely ready by the time of its author's death,' and my opinion was confirmed by common report. Unless some other person has had a hand in the book—a mitigatory suggestion indignantly repelled by Mme Praeger—or unless the manuscripts were returned to her husband for later correction, etc., I fear she was in error when she stated that the owner 'had had both manuscripts in his possession *years* before they were issued to the public.'"

I am nearing the end of that past *Rejoinder* now, but it had still to deal with the unparalleled excuse that, at the time the German manuscript was being written, "the owner of these letters was some thousand of miles away. In order to fulfil his contract, Mr Praeger evidently rendered the English of the letters back into German," etc. (see pages 76-7 *sup.*). To this I made rejoinder: "I must ask why

an inspection courteously granted, in part, to myself the other day, and obtained in a measure by his [F. P.'s] son some short time previously—whilst, certainly in my case, the owner both of letters and MSS. was beyond reach of any message—why such an inspection should have been impossible to the man who was 'bound by contract' to this selfsame owner? But even then, the contract could scarcely be deemed fulfilled by the substitution (without a syllable of comment) of a miserable German paraphrase for the original words of the letters! . . . Again, was E. Roeckel thousands of miles away? Was the wedding-card? Were the *Letters to Uhlig*, or at any rate the original copy of the letter to Fischer in the *Neue Zeitschrift?* Were the letters (?) of A. Roeckel, and the latter's book? Were Heinrich Heine's works? And finally were Wagner's *Gesammelte Schriften* inaccessible? Nothing more damaging to Praeger's book has been advanced by any of the 'conspirators,' than this admission of his widow's, for it betrays on his part the absence of a sentiment expected from all writers for posterity. If we cannot depend on letters, or extracts therefrom, being given *in their own language*, the very foundations of biography are sapped!"

So at last I reach my *M. Std* peroration, the main body of which I owe it to myself to reproduce: "I have rigorously abstained from introducing any *fresh* matter from among my copious notes on the book; but I cannot close without a final appeal to Mme Praeger, to allow that her late husband's powers were failing him. I do assure her, it is from no animosity, either personal or transmitted, that I have undertaken a task which has filled me with many a shudder, and which has temporarily taken me away from far more congenial pursuits. But I am determined to see this book suppressed, be it sooner or later—and the sooner the better, for I cannot stand calmly by and see other histories built on a foundation which I know to be rotten through and through. . . . Let me therefore appeal to Mme Praeger to allow the justice of the plea I lately advanced in her husband's behalf, to admit what so many of her husband's friends have told me, and what must be obvious to any careful student of the book itself—namely, that advancing years had told upon his powers of memory and discernment, as tell they will with almost every man who passes the limit sung-of by the Psalmist. Let us put aside this book for ever, and forget that Ferdinand Praeger wrote it!"

That the editor of the *Musical Standard* shared my wish, is shewn by the very first sentence of his leader, "PRAEGER AND WAGNER'S LETTERS: OUR SUMMING UP," in the next week's issue (June 2, 94): 'we feel that we must say a few words on the dispute before leaving the subject for ever. We will endeavour in the following summing-up to be entirely impartial, as our only desire is that our readers should judge for themselves as to the substantiation or otherwise of Mr Ellis's

charges against Praeger's 'Wagner as I knew him.'" From those "few words," amounting to nearly five columns, I will cull the most important :—"In a work such as 'Wagner as I knew him,' mostly composed as it is of 'chit-chat,' one expects a few inaccuracies, but if these exceed a reasonable limit one's confidence in the book vanishes. In the first place, we hardly know what to say of an author who translates German letters into English and then, when a German translation of his book is required, retranslates those English versions of the letters into German, instead of giving the original German letters. These, we are told, were not accessible at the time. Then the German version should have been kept back until they were, in spite of contracts. Or, if this were impossible, a notification should have been made that the letters were not textually reproduced. . . . Then again, why were not the English versions of the Wagner letters faithfully and accurately rendered into German? Instead of that we find, beyond all dispute, that they vary here and there, phrases having been left out, modified in meaning and so on. And from what motive?

"Mr Ellis has accused Praeger of continually insisting on his own importance. With regard to this charge, several instances are brought forward, but we will confine ourselves to the most important, the introduction of Wagner to the Philharmonic Society . . . In this matter we have the testimony of Wagner himself against that of Praeger." The editor passes to the subject of the mis-reproduced letters: "the proof that such additions and omissions were made, whether from carelessness or not, is beyond dispute. But we must mention the most glaring instance: the additions which Praeger made to the first letter Wagner wrote to him, dated 8th January, 1855 . . [editor quotes] . . The German version of this letter has one or two variations of even this extraordinary version of the original. We cannot see what can be urged in extenuation of these additions, and we must come to the conclusion that their *raison d'être* could only have been to raise the importance of Praeger in the eyes of the world . . . Such alterations of original letters are inexcusable, and we do not think we shall be considered biassed if we say that a man who could thus add to correspondence is not one on whose word we would care to place explicit reliance. From the serious matter of altered letters we come to that of the letters which Mr Ellis alleges cannot exist. [The editor proceeds to the rediscovered letter of Dec. 57 dealing with French copyright and the commenced full score of *Tristan*.] The perusal of this letter does not convince us of any reason why it was not published in the book, for it deals very little with private matters, which could have been eliminated, as is done in other letters published by Praeger, and, moreover, it is of great general interest. The only conclusion is that Praeger must have mislaid it, and trusted to his memory for its contents. Certainly he could not have had it before his eyes when he

wrote his book, or else the '1859' mistake would not have occurred. If he trusted to his memory with regard to this particular letter, why should he not have done the same thing with regard to the other letters? This would explain, doubtless to a great extent, their inconsistencies with facts. . . .

"Several letters are alleged to have been destroyed, and we must take Mme Praeger's word for it, though we hope they will some day be discovered, for it does not seem to have been Mr Praeger's habit to destroy Wagner's letters, judging from the number which are in existence. In the meantime we feel it our duty to point out that they [i.e. the 'problematics'] are so full of inconsistencies with historical facts that they cannot be accepted as evidence bearing on Wagner's character. With regard to the 'Minna' letter ["April 1864"] . . it will be seen that this letter as it stands cannot be accepted, and it was this letter which has been so much animadverted upon by anti-Wagnerites. . . . With regard to the 'Bumpus' episode Mr Ellis must be censured for not having admitted * the alternative of the copyist of the letter having missed the phrase. Though not of intrinsic importance, the incident showed that too much reliance can be placed on circumstantial evidence, and it also threw doubt on the accuracy of the other copies of Wagner's letters published by Mr Chamberlain. This has been set at rest, as far as possible, by the examination Mr Ellis has made of the original of the 'Philharmonic' letter, which has been copied by Mr Chamberlain with absolute accuracy, and it is therefore only reasonable to suppose that the other letters are accurate copies also." At last we arrive at the editor's unbiased "conclusion that 'Wagner as I knew him' is so full of inaccuracies *in every respect* [italicised in the *M. Std*] that in the interest of the master himself it should be withdrawn at once from circulation. We have not come to this conclusion without much anxious thought, nor without impartially weighing the evidence adduced by Mr Ashton Ellis in his articles and Rejoinder, and the reply of Madame Praeger herself."

Well, in Germany at least that wish of mine, as supported by the editor of the *M. Standard*, had its ultimate effect. In July of that same year 1894 both the articles from the *Bayreuther Blätter* ('93 and Feb. '94), together with the copies of the genuine letters (now rectified as to that 'Bumpus' passage), a short preface by Baron Wolzogen, a

* Surely the *M. Std* editor meant to say "entertained" or "conceived." The "censure" rather amused me at the time (still does), as the editor was simultaneously accepting my evidence on precisely the same ground as I had accepted Mr Chamberlain's—namely that of a reputation for honour and general accuracy. However, one cannot expect to emerge from any big battle without a scar; so I pocketed my "censure" with a benevolent smile.

few particulars from the *M. Std* articles of both sides and its editor's conclusion that the book should be withdrawn—were published in pamphlet form, under the title *Echte Briefe, etc.* Within two months thereafter I had the satisfaction of hearing from Mr Chamberlain that the head of the Breitkopf & Haertel firm—a personage, I imagine, who would more than meet the *Times'* requirements of an "unbiased reader"—after having carefully read that pamphlet, "*is at once withdrawing Praeger's book from circulation*, only he does not want to make an 'öffentliche Erklärung' ['public declaration'], and begs me also not to publish the fact. So please consider this important news—*pro tem*—as for private circulation only."

That embargo was very soon removed, and directly owing to the headstrong tactics of our opponents. Some person or persons had commenced anonymous assaults upon us on the German side of the water, which of course were not replied to; on the 2nd of April 1895 Chamberlain wrote me, "You, Wolzogen and I having been grossly attacked in a German paper *in re* Praeger—I sent the article to Breitkopf. This is the answer. Please let the fact be known and published, and say that we are authorized to do so by Messrs B. & H." The said "answer" was the following, except, of course, that it was framed in German :—

Leipzig, 29th March 1895.

Dear Sir,

After the article communicated to us, we naturally feel it our bounden duty to comply with your wish. We empower you to state that we withdrew Praeger's work from the book-market in summer 1894, *as soon as the untruthfulness of that publication had been proved to us. We are thankful to you for having at that time shewn us the facts of the case, for we of course will not tolerate upon our lists* (in unserem Verlage) *any work that distorts the truth.*

If we thought right at first to withdraw the book in silence (*stillschweigend*), *it was out of regard for the President of the London Wagner Society, who had stood sponsor to the publication in perfect good faith; we also then assumed that the other side would let this book repose among the dead.*

Respectfully,

BREITKOPF UND HÄRTEL.

To Herr Houston S. Chamberlain, Wien [*etc.*].

At last! Exactly three years from the day on which I had first warned members of the London Wagner Society against "certain errors and inaccuracies" in this book, its German publishers withdrew from it the ægis of their honoured name.

Of course I took the earliest opportunity of sending the above

announcement to the *Musical Standard*, where it appeared on the 13th April 1895, tho' with asterisks for the "sponsor's," i.e. Owner's title. In the next number of the *Meister* (May 22) I reprinted it unasterisked as "a final word on the late Ferd. Praeger's 'Wagner as I knew him'"—having at the same time to record our President's resignation "on the 17th ult." I regretted that resignation, as the gentleman's own sight was so impaired that he could in no just way be held responsible for this ghastly pair of books; moreover, and purely for his own sake, we had piously kept his name from being dragged into the controversy thitherto.

May 1, 1895, without my privity the *Musical Courier* of New York (a weekly of enormous circulation) came out with a leaderette: "The curious statements embodied in a book by Praeger have been discovered by Houston S. Chamberlain, and at his request the publishers, Breitkopf & Härtel, in Leipsic, have withdrawn the book. Great credit is due to this firm for this honourable action—of course it could do no less. The following letter written to Mr Chamberlain will be welcome news to the friends of fair play and of the great master [reproduction of letter above]. It is to be hoped that the English publishers will now follow the example of the German publishing house."—When that otherwise most welcome paragraph came to my knowledge a few weeks later, I discovered that by some inadvertence "the London Wagner Society" appeared in lieu of "the President" thereof, in the *M. C.'s* reproduction of Messrs B. & H.'s letter. It therefore became necessary for me, in a letter signed June 26 and published in the New York issue of that journal for July 17, 1895, to point out that the Wagner Society had had nothing whatever to do with the publication, and that our President had "in a private capacity owned the manuscripts etc. of Praeger's book, and it is purely in a private capacity that he has dealt with them and it from first to last."

Meanwhile, and immediately after Messrs B. & H.'s withdrawal had been made known in Germany, an individual—even of whose sex we at first were ignorant, and whom I will therefore range with Mme Praeger's "total strangers"—commenced a series of signed attacks from London on Chamberlain and myself, first in Germany, then in England and America; attacks which would be far beneath an historian's notice, did they not incidentally supply the surest proof of plenary correctness of the copies of Wagner's letters now published in the *Echte Briefe*. The tactics of poor Praeger's champions themselves exposed the dire forlornness of their cause. For the Total Stranger served up in a Stuttgart music-journal a re-hash of Mme Praeger's *M. Standard* remarks of the previous year, ignoring alike Mr C.'s and my own refutations and the *M. Std* editor's summing up. Challenged by the Stuttgart editor to reply, Mr Chamberlain sent May 14, 95, a reproduction of those two contrasting versions of the

opening of that 'Philharmonic' letter: after keeping it for four whole weeks, the Stuttgart editor declined it with the comment that it "refuted nothing"!!

Then the Total Stranger turned her attention to America, and treated the New York *M. Courier* of June 26, 95, to a translation of that selfsame plausible *suppressio veri* with which she had already regaled the Stuttgart-Leipzigers. To this, as the reader may imagine, I had no difficulty in making a destructive rejoinder in the N. Yk *M. Courier* of July 31, from which I need merely quote one passage here: "But let me ask one simple question: If this book of Praeger's is about to be republished by [T. O.'s] permission,* with a preface by Frau [Total Stranger], this lady *must* have had the opportunity of verifying the accuracy of Mr Chamberlain's copies from the original letters (without such verification of disputed documents no honest person could engage in the task of republishing the book); in that case, and a whole year having elapsed since Mme Praeger's innuendo that Mr C.'s copies cannot be relied on, has she found any other omissions etc. of any kind? Obviously none! Yet she preserves total silence on the point."

Now comes the clencher. The New York *M. Courier* printed in its issue of Sept. 14, 95, a letter of one column's length from the Total Stranger. Its last paragraph contains these words: "When I commenced investigating the matter of Praeger's book, [T. O.], although I was a perfect stranger to him, was good enough to allow me to inspect all necessary documents and to give me much valuable information"; so that T. T. S. had had the said opportunity of verification, and *before she commenced her defence* of the thing. Yet that exceedingly "simple question" of mine is farcically evaded thus in the opening sentence of her letter: "As the antagonist of Mr Ellis in this controversy I refrain—for the reason that my judgment might be considered partial—from expressing an opinion on the article appearing over his name in your New York edition, No. 804," i.e. the article from which I have quoted last! *How* the Total Stranger managed to fill her column without so much as pretending to deal with a single point in my annihilation of her brief, I leave the student of strange manners to unearth; with such subsidiaries the historian has no concern, saving when they chance to have had access to historic documents.

To sum up, then. The complete accuracy of Mr Chamberlain's copies, as now reprinted in the *Echte Briefe*, is established even by the mute confession of a hostile witness; the whole fabric of Praeger's twin Wagner-books, were there not a hundred other laches in them, is consequently demolished by that fact alone. Let me cite a parallel

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* Naturally not by Messrs Breitkopf & Haertel; but an attempt *was* made to launch the German sloop again.—1905 note.

instance from George Henry Lewes' *Life of Goethe*, where he deals with Bettina von Arnim's *Goethe's Correspondence with a Child:* "The *Correspondence* is a romance. A harsher phrase would be applied were the offender a man, or not a Brentano, for the romance is put forward as biographical fact; not as fiction playing around and among fact. How much is true, how much exaggeration, and how much pure invention, I am in no position to explain. But Riemer, the old and trusted friend of Goethe, living in the house with him at the time of Bettina's arrival, has shown the *Correspondence* to be a 'romance which has only borrowed from reality the time, place, and circumstances'; and from other sources I have learned enough to see both Goethe's conduct and her own in quite a different light from that presented in her work. . . . Instead of Goethe turning her letters into poems, Riemer accuses her of turning Goethe's poems into her letters. An accusation so public and so explicit—an accusation which ruined the whole authenticity of the *Correspondence*—should at once have been answered. The production of the originals with their post-marks [in those days there were no envelopes] might have silenced accusers. But the accusation has been fourteen years before the world, and no answer attempted." Then, presumably referring to the first edition of his book (I quote from the 3rd), "Although the main facts had already been published, a perfect uproar followed the first appearance of this chapter in Germany. Some ardent friends of Bettina's opened fire upon me with a pamphlet, which called forth several replies in newspapers and journals; and I believe there are few Germans who now hesitate to acknowledge that the whole correspondence has been so tampered with as to have become, from first to last, a romance. . . Nay, the only opportunity which the public has had of comparing the letters printed by Bettina with the originals they profess to represent, has disclosed the most audacious transformations and additions . . . One may overlook Bettina's intimating that she was only thirteen, when the parish register proves her to have been two-and-twenty; but it is impossible to place the slightest reliance on the veracity of a book which exhibits flagrant and careless disregard of facts; and if I have been somewhat merciless in the exposure of this fabrication, it is because it has greatly helped to disseminate very false views respecting a very noble nature."—To my shame, I have to confess I had never read that passage in Lewes' *Life of Goethe* till the whole Praeger controversy had passed into the region of *choses jugées;* but might he not have written it expressly for quotation by friend Chamberlain and myself?

Both Chamberlain and I were threatened with all sorts of dreadful things soon after. In my case a stolid reference to my solicitor freed me from all further annoyance. Mr Chamberlain having fared otherwise, I wrote him the other day to refresh my memory, for the

present purpose, as to *his* precise fortunes in the matter, and this is what he answered me: "It never came in my case to a real *action*, because the commission of judges which examines the suits [in Germany] *before* their being admitted before the court, decided that there was *no case*. The other party appealed from this, but a second time it was decided that there was not a shadow of a case—even in the statement of my accusers. So no 'judgment' was passed.—The book has never been reissued here, and is completely crushed out and never quoted" (Aug. 29, 1905).

As for England, I wrote to Messrs Longmans, Green & Co. the middle of April 1895, informing them of Messrs Breitkopf & Haertel's withdrawal, and asking them if they did not intend to follow suit. From that day to this I have had no answer from them, though I could hardly expect them to take the same interest in matters concerning a foreign genius as had been displayed by his compatriots. Perhaps they have "silently" withdrawn it, as the German firm originally had done: I cannot say, and at this time of day it were bootless to enquire again. But surely there ought to be some means at our public reading-rooms—such as the inscription "unreliable: letters disputed"—of preventing the unwary student or budding journalist from being misled by such proved perversions of biography. Until such means be found, I shall have to continue to expose Praeger's misstatements in detail whenever they are of sufficient moment to call for notice on my path, however little it may be to the "taste" of a few recidivists.

Page 53. CHORLEY ON LOHENGRIN AND TANNHÄUSER.—Henry Fothergill Chorley has referred with such evident pride to his achievements in the way of slating *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*, that it would be unkind not to rescue them from the shades of the back volumes of the *Athenæum*. Here, then, is what the Redoubtable contributes to the Impeccable of Sept. 14, 1850, concerning the historic première of *Lohengrin*. After a preamble on the results to be expected of friend Liszt's endeavours at the Weimar theatre, Mr Chorley sets off at full galop (*Athenæum* no. 1194):—

"Viewed in this light, we have rarely assisted at any celebration more interesting than the first production of Herr Wagner's opera of 'Lohengrin' on the anniversary of Goethe's birthday. The story of the commission is worth recording. The composer appears to have been born under a star of nonconformity,—to be largely endowed with enterprise, fancy, and obstinacy. He has always been his own *librettist;* having some years ago submitted a *libretto*, 'The Flying Dutchman' to the management of *L'Académie* in Paris, with the hopes of being commissioned to set the same. There, the story was found so original, and the musician so little practicable [?], that the

latter was fairly bought out, while the *libretto* was purchased and given to M. Dietsch,—by whom it was set without success. Herr Wagner is his own copyist, too,—and more exquisite manuscript than his we never saw. While under the service of the King of Saxony as *Kapellmeister* he took part in the recent German revolutions ; and on this ground (to say nothing of the more direct argument of the style of his music,) he has since knocked at theatre-door after theatre-door without chance of hearing until the opera-house of Weimar let him in. Assuredly no establishment solely depending on public opinion, and not on the court *ipse-dixit*, would have received his 'Lohengrin.'

"'Lohengrin' though not a work to be ignored, is still less one to be generally accepted. The *libretto* is based on the well-known legend of the 'Knight of the Swan,' contains some picturesque points,—but it is vexatiously full of effects missed and improbabilities unreconciled. Principal characters are allowed to stand still on the stage without note to sing or sign to make during entire *finales* [?]. Such neglects of contrast abound, as duett succeeding duett. The pieces are immoderate in their length. All these faults would be singularly odd as coming from a musician writing for music, were they not explained by the fact that Herr Wagner has 'a system.' When such a defence is made for novelties that are merely so many blemishes, who can avoid recollecting Horace Walpole's farewell words to Hogarth—'My dear Sir, you grow too wild, I must take my leave of you'?—Who will not deprecate our ever becoming used to pyramids with their points downward, pilgrimages that lead nowhere, question without reply, ponderous machinery set in motion when the strings prove not so much cables as cobweb-threads perpetually broken? [Quite Carolysztian of turn—the princess must have got on his nerves.]

"To particularize a little more closely:—Herr Wagner's attempt has been, to produce a work of pure declamation, without the slightest reference to melody, charm, or established form on the part of the vocalists. 'Lohengrin' reminded us of nothing so much as one of the weakest operas of Lulli's school—spiced with outrageous orchestral condiments of which Lulli never dreamed. Even considered as a tissue of recitatives accompanied, the effect was bad:—monotonous from the superabundance of suspenses and pauses, and from the platitude of many of the phrases devoted to the strongest emotions. Despite the perpetual efforts now made to prove them separate, no one, it may be suspected, will ever write a really fine recitative who cannot also write a really beautiful melody. But we were yet more struck by another particularity. Though Herr Wagner will not minister to the meretricious *a due* which every pair of singers naturally enough like to sing,—though to judge from 'Lohengrin' he would not be guilty of a *cabaletta* were the success of his opera (or of his republican ideas) dependent on it,—seeing that rhythm and ordinance must be somewhere or the work could

never be kept together, he has lavished rich devices of form and melody on the orchestra. Listening very attentively, we came to the conclusion that it is the violins and others that declaim, while the actors and actresses scream [borrowed from Dingelstedt—cf. iii, 476]. The parts of hero and heroine, villain and confidant [!], are terribly wearying in their excess of overstrained monotony,—in their perpetual and tantalizing approach toward some great climax, explosion or combination which never arrives. But the band has intelligible and vivacious services to perform. Some of the accompaniments are excellent. A curtain tune to the third act (almost important enough to make a short overture) is one of the most captivating and joyous inspirations we ever heard ; and a march at the opening of the last scene, with four separate groups of trumpeters on the stage, is so grandiose and exciting as a piece of combination and effect and parade that M. Meyerbeer may well take to bed on hearing of it—unless it should prove that it was he who originated the same by the much-talked-of *finale* in his 'Camp de Silésie' [hereafter "l'Etoile"].

"In short, the impression left on us by 'Lohengrin' is that of power and perversity perpetually jostling and neutralizing each other. A system more systematically inconsistent has rarely been so emphatically illustrated. If the accomplishments of the beautiful art of singing are to be so entirely abrogated on the plea of their conventionalism, why not also the beauties and effects of instrumental execution? Does the trill which is meretricious in the voice and incapable (say the transcendentalists) of conveying inner meaning, become pathetic, poetical, philosophical when it is produced by the fingers on the strings of twenty violins at once? Why is a vocal scale passage on '*smania*' or '*gioja*,' whether ascending or descending, more unbeseeming and frivolous than an orchestral one? Why are melodies in even numbers of bars to be counted as elegant in a symphony, if they are vulgar in a song? Why write thirds for the violins if thirds for the voices are to be exploded as so much sugary twaddle? Time is wasted over questions like these.—The truth is that such nonsense will not bear looking into ; being virtually—let Herren Wagner and Schumann and M. Berlioz take it as they will—merely a mask snatched up to conceal want of invention, or that want of knowledge which takes its refuge in a hot and unreasoning partisanship.

"There is small fear, we think, of Opera being thus destroyed at present. While the principle of dramatic propriety is respected, the canons of grace and beauty must not be outraged. Nor do we apprehend that 'Young Germany' will ever really thrive till some genius shall appear rich, wise, and calm enough to conciliate both. Meanwhile, such experiments as Herr Lachner's [read "Wagner's"] are of the deepest interest. Every one seems to agree that the 'Tannhauser,' the penultimate opera by the same composer (holding a relation to

'Lohengrin' similar to those of 'Der Freischütz' with 'Euryanthe and of 'Robert' with 'Les Huguenots,') is a much more popular and pleasing work. The overture which we heard admirably played on the pianoforte [by Liszt], seemed to be grand, noble, on clearly marked subjects,—and though overcharged, excellent in structure and exciting in development. We should expect it when heard with orchestra to prove more interesting and fresh than Meyerbeer's overture to 'Struensee':—with which it is but natural to compare it.

"Who could help speculating on what the great poet and critic in commemoration of whom 'Lohengrin' was produced would have said to such a chaotic tribute?—The opera was most carefully given; preluded by an elegant prologue, written for the occasion by Herr Dingelstedt. . . ."

At Weimar, under the spell of Liszt, Chorley could temper his blame with a gleam or two of hearty praise; so that the first English criticism of *Lohengrin* discerned the very piece of it, that introduction to act iii, which has since become a universal favourite in the English concert-room. But two years later Chorley goes to Dresden, where Reissiger is beating all the spirit out of his ex-colleague's opera, and the following is the sad result—"Notes on Music in Germany," *Athenæum* no. 1312, Dec. 18, 1852:

"But Dr Schumann is as clear as Truth and as charming as Grace themselves, if he be measured against the opera-composer who has been set up by Young Germany, at the composer's own instigation, as the coming man of the stage:—I mean, of course, Herr Wagner. Concerning this gentleman's arrogant self-praise,—and the love borne him by his congregation, the Athenæum has already spoken,—and I need only say without qualification or preface, that a hearing of his 'Tannhäuser,' at Dresden, confirmed to the utmost every impression made by 'Lohengrin.'—Such pleasure as that opera can excite is not musical, but belongs to the choice and treatment of the legend. This is attractive and haunting because of its fantastic romance, in spite of some defects in stage arrangements. The tale of Dame Venus, the pagan demon goddess who held her court in the bowels of the Thuringian hills—with whom a Minnesinger sojourned for awhile—and the fatal consequences of such sojourn—had already served as basis for one of Tieck's most charming *Märchen*,—and Herr Wagner has not unskilfully interwoven it with one of those idyllic contests for the palm of song which also belong to the knightly old times. There is a thought, too, of great beauty in the last scene; in which, having returned to the *Wartburg* where this temptress dwells, and narrowly escaped from her fatal fascinations, the Tannhäuser is recalled to earthly consciousness by the death-song chanted over the bier of the mortal maiden whose heart had broken for his sake.—I cannot but think that it must be sympathy with the spirit of this story which can

enable even the German public most soaked in transcendental mysticism to endure the manner in which it has been set to music by its inventor:—Herr Wagner hardly practises what he preaches. Resolute on destroying all stage conventions, he is nevertheless determined on making his musical dramas please by every stage accessory and trick. The German managers speak with dismay of a peremptory pamphlet circulated by him, reproving the Dresden theatre for its inefficient and parsimonious execution of the 'Tannhäuser,' and protesting against the performance of his opera unless it be dressed out with every conceivable luxury for the eyes [?—cf iii, 362 *seq*]. Being his own librettist, this novel philosopher in search of truth has no scruple against writing his opera book in rhymed verse,—though he will have neither airs nor duetts, and only the smallest number of concerted pieces possible. Though he does not hesitate to reduce his singers to mimes whenever it pleases him, Herr Wagner caters his best for the orchestra. Now, what truth is there in the perpetual noise of a band, if literal presentation be the object in view? Why should not the orchestra be silent throughout a whole scene—supposing the terror or pity of the situation to require it?—In one respect, however, Herr Wagner is consistent. His aversion to melody is equalled by his poverty in the article. Small matter whether he hides from *motivi* or whether *motivi* hide from him,—there are only two subjects meriting such a name in the 'Tannhäuser,' these being the themes wrought into the overture. For, though a tolerably brilliant March, in the second act, sounds a marvel of beauty in the midst of such a wearisome chaos of spasmodic sounds,—it is rhythmical rather than melodious.—Yet, if ever there was a tale claiming an entirely opposite mode of treatment, it is this. The magic Bower of Venus, with its nymphs, bacchanals, and sirens, demanded something more voluptuously sweet than such a grotesque mixture of flute and cymbal as would fitly serve for table music to the wicked and deformed old fairy *Carabossa* when she sits down to dine on her cookery sauced with poison.—The herdsboy's song on the rock in the morning-scene trails along vapidly, independent of the pilgrims' hymn with which it was meant to be combined.—The contest of minstrels resembles nothing so much as a series of dreary sermons delivered by several men, in neither recitative nor *aria*, to a harp accompaniment. Alas! out of their stupifying preachment there is not to be extracted, even as little as, 'that sweet word Mesopotamia,' on the gain of which the old woman went home satisfied that she had not lost her time at church. The final *stretto* after their tiresome prosing was as welcome as is a glimpse of daylight to men waking from a nightmare,—merely because it contains a few bars of climax for the voices which are successively introduced, and subsequently grouped according to the commonest Italian receipt. How low must the opera-goer be brought when he can think of Verdi

with complacency and longing?—In the last act, monologue frantic succeeds to monologue whining; and how either can be learnt by the singers is a mystery.—But conceding that 'Tannhäuser' is to be considered merely as a recitative opera written after the fashion of Lulli, with an orchestra tenfold stronger than Mdlle. de Montpensier's *marmiton* ever dreamed of, it is a failure if tried by its own rules. The recitative is bad and untrue; because it possesses none of those cadences ministering repose to the ear which are indispensable to the recitation of verse, and which habitually belong to the parlance of every civilized human being. Perpetual strain, perpetual emphasis, perpetual awkwardness of interval,—these are Herr Wagner's materials for that true declamation which is to carry out with improvements the famous canons of Gluck, and to make of music that utterly unmusical thing in which all the world is to delight.

"Yet more, in the use of that huge conventionalism, the orchestra—to which every other conventionalism is to be sacrificed—Herr Wagner does not seem to me felicitous in 'Tannhäuser.' The overture pleased me more when I heard it given by Dr Liszt's two marvellous hands on the piano than when it was rendered by Herr Reissiger's capital and sensitive band. There is a want of proportion and richness in the filling-up, owing to which certain of the effects meant by the composer to be among his strongest come forth but feebly.* This is to be felt in his treatment of the introduction; and yet more strongly in the *coda*, where a whirling and busy figure for the violins (owing to ill-calculated sonority) is overborne by the harsh and blatant brass instruments, in place of being wrought up together with them into a rich and well-balanced *fortissimo*. Not only are the singers throughout the opera tormented as concerns their intrinsic occupation,—but the acutest tones of the violin, or the group of sourest flute notes, are employed high above the male voices, without the latter being indulged with due support from beneath.—After the sarcastic and arrogant depreciation of MM. Meyerbeer and Berlioz published by Herr Wagner, the world had a right to expect from him something far more rich, brilliant, and peculiar in his instrumentation than they have received. But the discoveries and innovations made by his betters [the insolence of C.!] he employs in the uncouth fashion of a schoolboy; writing audaciously in proportion as his real knowledge is limited.

"Such without exaggeration are my impressions of 'Tannhäuser'—a work not to be endured to the end without melancholy wonder at the pains which it has cost, and yet more painful amazement at its being found admirable by recipients [Liszt and friends] from whom a truer taste might have been expected. There is comfort, however, in thinking that beyond Herr Wagner in his peculiar manner it is hardly

* That's just the point; Reissiger hadn't the brains to conduct it.—W. A. E.

possible to go. The saturnal of licentious discord must have here reached its climax. It is true the 'conventionalisms' of the orchestra have still to be destroyed;—only were this done, since all pretext of music would cease, the thing produced would no longer be within the domain of Art, but would rather come under the care of a society for the suppression of nuisances."

As Chorley appears to have been the solitary London critic who had heard a note of Wagner's music prior to the Spring of 1854, it is to him and his tirades in the *Athenæum* that must be attributed the sneering antagonism with which that master was greeted even before his arrival in England. Chorley set the fashion; the others simply followed his lead—at quite a respectable distance at first. As in caps. II. and III. I have given Davison's greetings of the news of Wagner's Philharmonic engagement, I therefore now append Chorley's for the purpose of comparison:—

Athenæum, Jan. 27, 55: "Supposing that we were to be spiritedly shown that no competent conductors exist in England—we submit that it was not needful to pick out from among all the Continental musicians the man of men whose avowed and published creed [?] is contempt for all such music as the English love, and whose acceptance in Germany is universally spoken of as a business of party, arranged and maintained by the destructives and kept at fever-heat by the strong personal influence of one of the most remarkable men of his time, Dr Liszt. Where this has not penetrated, Herr Wagner's two operas are not received [!]. Our own opinion of them, as false in principle, repulsive in effect, and bad as examples, has been already recorded, nor does increasing acquaintance with them lead us to reverse our judgment. In short, the appointment of Herr Wagner can be regarded as nothing short of a wholesale offence to the native and foreign conductors resident in England,—the justification of which can only be found in the quarrels of selfishness with self-interest, terminated by a joint resolution to elect the candidate whom there was no possibility of any section of our amateurs or connoisseurs supporting."

Ibid. Feb. 3: "As a composer, Herr Wagner (supposing him to be what he himself and his admirers assume—a second Gluck) is less presentable at an instrumental concert than most of his predecessors and contemporaries. His overture and march from 'Tannhäuser,' his *entr'acte* from 'Lohengrin' may be given, it is true;—but this is well nigh all the music from their composer's hand that is available,—since his operas, which are written on principle not to be sung, but to be acted, can hardly be conceived fit for a concert-room, even by Philharmonic sapiency. Nor is Herr Wagner, we believe, a *solo* player on any instrument. In short, the more closely the appointment is looked into, the more clearly will its want of reason (if not want of right) as well as its want of courtesy become evident:—and the more

expedient does it seem that the nomination should be sifted and judged, not by the few in council who may have agreed to split their own differences by affronting the entire body of resident professors, but by the members of the Philharmonic Society. We dwell on these and other new plans and performances, which so curiously mark the opening of this year of confusion 1855, because our times are strange and events call for no common vigilance."

Of such a man there plainly was no hope. He had already resisted Liszt's charming ; his face was set.

Page 92. MARSCHNER AND WAGNER.—In illustration of the manner in which Wagner and his works were treated by all the renowned musicians of the middle of last century save Spohr and Liszt, his experiences with Heinrich Marschner are worth recording, now that we have reached the long-deferred production and success of *Tannhäuser* in Marschner's stronghold. For most of the particulars I rely on Dr Georg Fischer's *Musik in Hannover*, a careful digest of official archives, published 1903. Here we learn that Marschner had been Musikdirector for two years at the Dresden court-theatre under Weber, after whose death (1826) he resigned since there was no prospect of his stepping into Weber's shoes. Thereon he wrote his successful operas *Vampyr* and *Templer*, also his now-forgotten *Falkner's Braut*, and at the beginning of 1831 succeeded F. Praeger's father as Kapellmeister at the Hanover court-theatre. In August of the following year he completed his ever-green *Hans Heiling*, produced at Berlin under his own direction May 1833, at Hanover in September, and midway between the two at Leipzig (not at Dresden for a long time yet, observe).

We leap ten years of comparative unproductivity on Marschner's side, and come to Wagner's parallel conductorship at Dresden. Within a twelvemonth of Wagner's entry on office, *Hans Heiling* was produced there under his baton, Jan. 26, 1844 ; on the 5th of the following January Marschner's *Adolph von Nassau*, completed in the interval, attained at Dresden its first performance anywhere. Exactly five months from the latter date, Wagner writes Gaillard of Berlin : "Whatever I do, is either greatly distorted for outside newspapers, or—which is almost worse—its success is passed in total silence. For instance, when I entered office I found Marschner's 'Hans Heiling' slumbering peacefully in the cupboard, tho' it had been accepted for production ten years before ; I drew that opera out, and had it performed.—I heard that Marschner had finished a new opera, '*Adolf von Nassau;*' I insisted upon this work's making its first appearance here, and astonished the composer no little, who would have expected the Dresden theatre to tumble in before it formed a like resolve. . . . Have you read a word of all this in the reports from Dresden ?" (cf. vol. ii, 86*n*).

Shortly after the first of these two signs of Wagner's comradeship a question was raised for the first time in the Hanoverian press, so Dr Fischer tells us: "Why does our theatre take no notice of Richard Wagner, whose operas 'Rienzi' and 'Der Fliegende Holländer' have been given on [one or two of] the largest stages with success, and merit attention if only as German works of a gifted genius? As Marschner is so glad to support aspiring talents, he ought not to let himself be deprived of the merit of introducing Wagner, who moreover is his local fellow-countryman, upon our stage." Nothing came of that question, or rather less than nothing; for it is distinctly humorous to hear that when Marschner started for Dresden the middle of December 1844, to superintend the rehearsing of his *A. von Nassau* there, a Hanover journal announced that "en échange the Dresden Kapellmeister Reissiger is coming to Hanover shortly, to make us acquainted with his opera Adèle de Foix." * Thus Reissiger reaped the reward of his colleague's enterprise, though his own opera, produced at Hanover Jan. 17, 45, "almost justified its nickname *Adèle deux fois.*"—As for Wagner, not only did Marschner never advocate the performance of a work of his at Hanover, but in 1859, when it became a question of pensioning Marschner off, the Intendant declared that this veteran Hof-Kapellmeister "had declined to conduct operas such as Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, the Huguenots and the Prophet" (again it is amusing to see how little love was lost between the three composing M.s).

The first time *any* of Wagner's music was heard at Hanover, was nearly two years after his disinterested promotion of *A. v. Nassau* at Dresden, and even then it was none of Marschner's doing: Nov. 14, 1846, the overture to *Rienzi* was performed in the Ball-room by five military bands grouped under the military bandmaster Gerold. The first time any of Wagner's vocal music was heard there, was Nov. 10, 1849, when a duet from *Rienzi* was sung at a miscellaneous concert in the Hanstein hall. The credit of a proper introduction belongs to Joachim, who—fresh from Liszt and Weimar—gave the *Tannhäuser*

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* Dr Fischer reads this as an indication that it was Reissiger who had instigated the production of *A. v. N.* at Dresden; a very slender reed to lean on, in face of Wagner's plain statement above (of which Dr F. was doubtless unaware). Moreover, in August 1853 Wagner writes his old Dresden friend W. Fischer, then re-appointed regisseur: "I have been reading grand things about your stage-managing of 'Hans Heiling' etc. Let us hope you will soon give Adolph von Nassau too. . . . How does it strike that soul of a man L., to have you putting on operas again? Doesn't it make him think of myself at times, and how you always stood by me, and how R. had to draw his claws in?" Reissiger, in fact, having been appointed over Marschner's head, had put every obstacle in his way at Dresden—see ii, 55*n*.

overture at the third of the newly-formed Subscription concerts, Feb. 5, 1853, just a month after his appointment as Concertmeister. It frightened the good blind king at first, and at its end he exclaimed, "Dear Joachim, what hideous music you've been playing there!"—to which the leader ventured to reply, "Might your Majesty be pleased to listen to it once again?"—whereupon the royal command was given for its repetition; evidently with a more satisfactory impression, as the overture was repeated in April at a concert supplementing a short opera, and again at a concert directed by Fischer in November of that year. Further, it was Joachim who gave the first impulse to the Hanover production of the opera itself, which, as related in cap. II. of this volume, took place the 21st of January 1855; a fact it is of interest to link with Wagner's message to Liszt of two days previously, expressing a wish to advocate the cause of Joachim in London (p. 81 *sup.*). Soon afterwards came Spohr's visit to Hanover, and the concert of March 31, 55, in his honour, concluding with the prelude etc. from *Lohengrin* conducted by Kapellmeister Fischer—alike Wagner and Joachim had hoped that the latter would be allowed to conduct the *Lohengrin* pieces, but official etiquette forbade. Unfortunately the Carolysztian articles on Schumann followed immediately (pp. 16-19), and—though I stand open to correction by Dr Joachim himself—I cannot but conjecture that they were the chief cause of Wagner's name being incontinently dropped from the Hanover Subscription-concert programmes, and Liszt's never appearing there at all; for the mischief wrought in silence by those tactless essays is scarcely to be plumbed.

And Marschner? So completely had he forgotten Wagner's friendly acts of 1844-5 towards him, that at the very time when *Tannhäuser* was in serious contemplation for the Hanover theatre he sent Hitzschold a long effusion full of gall, dated Sept. 28, 1854 (reproduced by Tappert, and quoted in part by Dr Fischer): "Was Wagner, as politician, anything else than a noise-maker (*Lärmmacher*)? Of his activity in that direction I have heard nothing beyond his pulling the alarm-bells and then leaving the country. On the occasion of the Dresden Jubilee [1848] I heard him politise in a way to strike me deaf and blind [that speech happens to be on record, though, Prose Works VII.]. Nevertheless I tried to make him understand that as artist and Kapellmeister he ought to have something better to do (according to old-fashioned notions), and may have thereby paved the way for his dislike of me. Only, I cannot speak otherwise than as I think"—says Marschner in this letter, without reflecting that "as artist and Kapellmeister" Wagner *had* done something a good deal better for him, that he (M.) himself in 1845 had made "the good success of Adolph von Nassau at Dresden" a lever for its desired acceptance at Berlin (see facsimile of his letter to Meyerbeer, *Die*

Musik 1902), and finally that Wagner's assumed "dislike" had never found articulate expression.

Marschner goes on: "No Liszts and Brendels, no Raffs [!] and Bülows, have stood as my apostles; such manufactured renommée would have shamed, nay, annihilated me . . . If my works have found friends and delighted hearts, it is by their own agency; I have done nothing further for them than create them. . . . How often have I wished for a few colleagues, to labour in the same sense with me, with equal or greater power, for the honour of German art and the warding-off of foreign rubbish. But alas! my efforts have stayed isolated, un-backed up, and my strength has been too weak to save the German stage (which year by year, unfortunately, has sunk to more and more of a 'common trollop') from foreign ways and gentlemen like Flotow. And now the good unstable German public is even being led astray by brochures, and worked into such a general confusion that it hardly knows whether to sacrifice the old gods to the new, or the new to the old. Modern fanaticism pays no kind of heed to the golden saying that—here as in other things—the golden mean of truth should be sought between the two assertions. In this battle also whoever does not believe, or let himself be converted, is slain. And that is what seems happening to myself: they want to annihilate me by *ignoring* me, i.e. not so much to slay me, as to make believe that I never existed, and consequently don't need slaying. That, in the eyes of this party, is a procedure as convenient as simple; but perhaps it will some day find its due exposure yet. However, I am accustomed to a like, if not so sly, procedure on the part of so-called Criticism directed against me as artist, so that the *Wagner party* does not afflict me quite as much as it perhaps proposed . . . You yourself will also know how little notice the so-called big professional journals have ever taken of my work and works, how few of them (even the greater ones) have been really seriously and worthily discussed; whereas the *Mendelssohn*, *Schumann* and *Wagner* clique [droll collocation] have often trumpeted the smallest thought of their associates in clamorous tones. Yes, it is true, such experiences have saddened my life [he married for his fourth time a year later], often wounded me deeply, and I have suffered much thereunder. But in spite of all I have not lived and striven quite in vain. Without protection, my compositions still have found their way to ears and hearts, rejoiced and turned them kindly toward me—perhaps all the longer for that . . . The dear public usually takes the greatest shouter for the cleverest man, believes and—follows him, if only for a while. And that is what *R. Wagner* also will discover, whose stricter pursuance of his doctrine (which, for that matter, he has not followed altogether strictly hitherto) is bound to lead him and his music to such idiocy and ugliness that the people fooled will

hasten back with zest and longing to the ancient order (without pigtail and periwig) and feel at home and happy there. If Wagner (besides being a man of intellect) were a true composer, and possessed all the natural gifts required of such, he certainly would not have needed to raise such a din, and lay hands on such means, to reach that fame as tone-poet which his ambition (or is it something else?) now makes him yearn for."

What a strange distortion of the true position it is! For the past ten years Marschner had composed nothing of real importance, and therefore could hardly expect the "big professional journals" to be occupying themselves much with him; neither did he need it, as his three chief works were favourites on the playbills at most of the German theatres. Wagner's, on the other hand, had only commenced their hard-fought progress two years since; and Hanover itself—whose operatic leader so yearned for "a few colleagues to work, with equal or greater power, for the honour of German art"—had kept them off its stage till now! Comfortably installed as senior Kapellmeister to a German court, with a provision for life and widow, Marschner might have felt some commiseration for a struggling outlaw who had twice befriended him in happier days. But, three weeks after *Tannhäuser's* success, *Hans Heiling* was remounted at the Hanoverian opera-house as counter-blow; and two months later, at the banquet to Spohr March 30, 55—the evening before the concert last referred to—Marschner wove into his toast a sour allusion to "the seed of discord which seems to have found its way already into the sacred womb of our glorious art. But just as night before the sun, so every cheating phantom, however beautifully adorned, shrinks back in face of truth. True beauty outshines all deformity," and so on (how well one knows the rest).

For all that, Marschner was unable to prevent the production of *Lohengrin* at Hanover on the 16th of December 1855, and fate shewed its irony by setting down a repetition of that opera for the evening of his own half-jubilee as Kapellmeister, Jan. 1, 1856. Times had begun to change, though one could wish this particular pill had been spared the jealous ancient. There still was plenty of room for both, if a man of 60 could but have been induced to see it.

Page 320. LATTER-DAY IMPERTINENCE.—What is the spirit of the New Criticism in matters of art and literature; will it compare at all favourably with that of half a century ago, as exposed on earlier pages of the present volume? To anyone brought up to a so-called 'learned' profession, this question must have frequently occurred of late. One turns from scientific journals where the labours of those who have spent their lives in exploring any special field are treated with due courtesy and respect, one turns from these (or indeed their

counterpart, the magazines devoted to a wholesome outdoor life) to articles and "studies"—I will not generalise, but take a flagrant case in point.

A very little while ago, my attention was called to a well-printed collection of essays by a writer whose name I spare posterity in mercy to himself; as I trust he still is less than half-way through life's journey, I will merely style him "Mr Youngman." On one of the earliest pages of that opuscule, as my indignant friend observed when sending it me to read, there stood a passage which filled me at once with pity for the writer's patent lack of wise surroundings, and even more for his lost opportunities of getting 'cheek' knocked out of him as boy at some good 'public' school. Here is the passage, all hot from what our modern reviewer would term an Appreciation of Hector Berlioz :—

"Many worthy people no doubt took their cue from Wagner, who, besides giving a nonsensical pseudo-analysis of Berlioz in *Opera and Drama* [cf. pp. 347-8 *sup.*—W. A. E.], referred to him disparagingly in a well-known letter to Liszt. It is tolerably clear, however, that Wagner knew comparatively little of Berlioz at that time, and that in running down *Benvenuto Cellini* and *La Damnation de Faust* he was only indulging that unfortunate habit of his of expressing himself very positively upon subjects he knew nothing about!" At this point occurs a footnote but for which, in my present rural seclusion, I might never have made acquaintance with its harbouring book: "The reader who is interested in the matter may turn to Wagner's letters to Liszt of 1852. Here he speaks slightingly of Berlioz's *Cellini*, and alludes to 'the platitudes of his Faust *Symphony* (!).' The last phrase alone is sufficient to show that Wagner was completely ignorant of the work he had the impertinence to decry—for every one knows that Berlioz's *Faust* is not a symphony. In a recent article in [a certain weekly] on 'The Relations of Wagner and Berlioz,' I have, I think, shown that Wagner could not have known a note either of the *Faust* or the *Cellini*; the dates of performance and of publication put any such knowledge on his part out of the question. It is necessary, however, to warn the reader that in both the English translation of the Wagner-Liszt letters (by Dr Hueffer, revised by Mr Ashton Ellis), and the big Glasenapp-Ellis *Life of Wagner*, the real facts are kept from the English public. The incriminating phrase, 'Faust Symphony,' is quietly abbreviated to 'Faust,' so that there is nothing to rouse the reader's suspicions and make him look further into the matter. In the big *Life*, again, now in course of publication, Mr Ellis, though he has thousands of pages at his disposal—though, indeed, he can devote a whole volume of five hundred pages to two years of Wagner's life—still cannot find room for the brief line or two from the 1852 letter that would put the real facts before the reader; discreet and silent

dots take their place. The British public is apparently to be treated like a child, and told only so much of the truth about Wagner as is thought to be good for it—or at any rate good for Wagner."

Taken by itself that was offensive enough, and the more offensive as coming from an author who in a previous work of more elaborate pretensions had drawn so largely on my own translations of the master's prose, after my besought and accorded permission. As Mr Y. is fond of appealing to the erudition of "every schoolboy," their code of honour might also have been consulted by him with advantage here. But he had whetted my curiosity, with his reference to "a recent article"; eager for a more convincing indictment of Wagner, I took measures to procure that Recent Article, and at last unearthed it from an issue of the * * * for October 1904, extracts from which I now append in elucidation of any obscurities that may perplex the reader of the Impertinence just cited :—

"In *Opera and Drama* there is that famous passage of pseudo-criticism, which with many good souls no doubt passed for a genuine analysis of Berlioz . . . .* but there is another reference of his to Berlioz that is worth looking at for a moment, if only to ask the official English Wagnerians if they are quite sure they have clean consciences in the matter." Nothing could be franker than this avowal of set purpose ; nothing could throw a stronger light on the object of the Impertinence aforesaid, which deals with the selfsame "reference to Berlioz" (in Wagner's "letter to Liszt of September 8, 1852") as do the next three meagre paragraphs of the Recent Article, devoted to proving the unlikelihood of Wagner's having previously heard or studied either the *Cellini* or the *Faust* of Berlioz—with stress again laid on Mr Y.'s assertion that "Wagner's use of the term 'Faust Symphony' clearly points to complete ignorance of the work which he has the impertinence to describe as consisting of platitudes" (?—see note next page). I shall return to this prize argument of Mr Y.'s, annihilate it, and lay bare its source. Meantime it is my painful duty to nail his further insolences to an unoffending counter ; so here is the Recent Article's unshorn conclusion, amounting to a quarter of the whole turn-out :—

"But why is it that the phrase 'Faust Symphony'—which, in the language of the vulgar, at once gives Wagner away—has been carefully withheld from the English public? Turn to Hueffer's translation of the Wagner-Liszt letters, revised by Mr Ashton Ellis, and you will find that the word 'symphony' has been deliberately omitted.

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* Mr Y. must forgive this little group of "silent dots," but might it not be infringement of copyright to quote him *in extenso?* Whether it would or not, my space is valuable, "if only" since each printed line costs money.

The sentence runs, 'the absurdities of his *Faust*.'* Turn next to the big Glasenapp biography which Mr Ellis is translating and expanding, and on page 337 of Volume III. you will find that Mr Ellis, though he is so prodigal of space that 1,300 pages are devoted to getting Wagner up to 1853, cannot find space to quote the incriminating lines of this letter. He omits all reference to *Faust*. He gives the sentence, 'If there is one composer [I really said "man"; but let that pass] I expect something of, it is Berlioz'; then he omits the rest of the sentence, making it appear that Wagner was simply bursting with generous artistic sympathy, and hiding that tell-tale passage from the innocent reader. Discreet dots do the work of concealment, and the letter is resumed with the sentence, 'But he needs a poet who shall fill him through and through.' Mr Finck, again, in his biography, prints the words 'Faust Symphony,' but without comment, and without any attempt to discover whether Wagner could have known Berlioz's work at all.

"With a knowledge of these facts the English reader has a rather better chance of appreciating the letter of September 8, 1852, at its true value. Berlioz did at least 'read and re-read' the prelude to *Tristan* before he [publicly] said he could make nothing of it; Wagner [in a private letter] disparaged *Cellini* and *Faust* upon the basis of an ignorance about as complete as one could imagine. Yet there is talk [by whom?] of the 'ingratitude' of Berlioz, while Wagner, thanks to the care with which his admirers revise his correspondence for the English public, is made to appear scarcely one degree lower than the angels. Thus—as I had occasion to remark once before—thus does Wagner-worship make for the 'truly human.'" Here followeth the signature in full.

Now this is very serious, this charge directed in general against the cleanness of conscience of "the official English Wagnerians," whoever those may be, and in particular against either the late Dr Hueffer (as I will assume for an instant) or myself; for we may eliminate Mr Finck, who has not even the qualification of residence in England, and moreover is let off with a mere censure for making no "comment" on the borrowed mare's-nest. Personally, I find it difficult to suppress my mirth until the moment when I can with decency admit my readers to a share in it; but it really is a serious charge, to wit of *mala fides*, made trebly serious by its repetition in book form after many months, and by the book's determination that

* The Recent Article here adds a footnote, "* 'Absurdities,' again, is not a faithful translation of the German 'Geschmacklosigkeiten.'" Perhaps "absurdities" is not, though it is the rendering given the word by a German who had been for years on the regular staff of the English *Times*; but it is much nearer the mark than Mr Y.'s French-lifted "platitudes." "Errors of taste" would be the form I should humbly prefer, if I were called on to translate it either faithfully or freely.

its earlier variant shall still be kept alive. Let me drill into closer rank the loose file of arraigning epithets : "carefully withheld . . . deliberately omitted . . . the incriminating lines . . . hiding that tell-tale passage . . . the work of concealment . . . the care with which his admirers revise his correspondence for the English public" (Recent Article)—"the real facts are kept from the English public. The incriminating phrase, 'Faust Symphony,' is quietly abbreviated . . . discreet and silent dots . . . told only so much of the truth as is thought to be good for it" (Book Impertinence). Furthermore, there is no possible shirking it, this "work of concealment" is all laid at my personal door : the solitary individual in this connection who by any stretch of imagination could be described as an "official English Wagnerian," ridiculous as is the term "official," must and can only be myself. To make assurance doubly sure, in each place emphasis is laid on the verb "revise"; in other words, it is deftly suggested that in the second edition of the late Dr Hueffer's translation of the Wagner-Liszt Correspondence, *I*, W. A. E., "deliberately omitted" from "that tell-tale passage" the "incriminating" designation "Symphony." If that be *not* the meaning, Mr Y. has yet to learn the value of plain language, and of dividing up his sentences so as not to convey a wrong idea.

Very well. I now have to ask why Mr Y., before advancing such a charge against a literary confrère, did not consult the original edition of Dr Hueffer's translation, in which, it is needless to inform his "schoolboy," I had no hand whatever? Any of the older critics would gladly have lent him a copy, and he then would have found that *not one syllable or comma in all that letter has been altered in its reprint* (1896 edition); in other words, that to specify "revised by Mr Ashton Ellis" is to give the reader a wholly false impression, stamped all the deeper by the remark as to "the care with which his admirers revise his correspondence." If Mr Y. had blamed me for *not* revising that particular letter, I could have forgiven him, as the publishers of the Wagner-Liszt Correspondence brought out the edition of 1896 with this on its title-page : "New edition revised, and furnished with an index, by W. Ashton Ellis." But he had only to read the first paragraph of my prefatory Note, and he would have seen that "This new edition of the *Correspondence of Wagner and Liszt* is substantially identical with the first, as translated by the late Dr Hueffer. In view of the admirable nature of Dr Hueffer's work, revision was unnecessary save in the case of a few misprinted words and dates. These misprints have been corrected in the present edition, so far as they have come or been brought to my knowledge ; as regards the dates of the letters themselves, I may add that I have carefully collated them all with those given in the original German edition."—I have always regretted that the publishers altered *my* term

"second edition" into "new edition" and cancelled the commencement of my second sentence, viz.: "As the reprint has been made from the stereo plates of the first edition, any thorough-going revision was of course quite out of the question" (the blue-pencilled MS. of that Note is still in my possession); but what remains thereof should have been ample to save Mr Y. from perpetrating such an innuendo.

Having shewn that *I* had nothing to do with that heinous "omission"—as Mr Y. might easily have ascertained if he had made search, in person or by deputy, at the British Museum or any similar library—I proceed to his charge that in this *Life of Wagner* I have made no reference at all to Berlioz' *Faust.* Perfectly true; neither Herr Glasenapp nor your humble servant has mentioned that work: we were not writing either a life or an 'appreciation' of Hector Berlioz, and consequently had no occasion to. As it is, "though I am so prodigal of space" that a whole chapter of the present volume is devoted more or less to Wagner's FAUST overture, try as I might I could find no convenient spot whereon to clap a dissertation on so entirely distinct a theme as the *Faust* of Berlioz (for which my general admiration is no less sincere than that professed by Mr Y.). I do not hold myself accountable to Mr Y., nor to any other critic on the face of the globe, for the topics I elect to discuss in a *Life* of this magnitude; my friendly readers I will remind, however, that the passage whereby Mr Y. makes an effort to back his most fanciful charge was cited by me in vol. iii purely and solely in connection with "the cause of musical *drama*" and Wagner's "endeavour to induce Berlioz to enter the lists as his rival," whilst "dots" occur at every third or fourth line, as there plainly was no necessity to quote such a "well-known letter" in full. Still more to the point: to any but the wilfully blind, it must be clear as day that Wagner's passing reference to Berlioz' *Faust* has no bearing whatever on the French composer's *musical* attainments, but merely on his "arbitrary handling, now of Shakespeare, now of Goethe," as *subject* for his tone-poems.

Enough about myself. The chief object of Mr Y.'s attack must be assumed to be Wagner, whom he taxes with knowing "comparatively little of Berlioz at that time." The contrary is the case: Wagner by then knew more of Berlioz' compositions at first-hand than at any later period, since he had repeatedly heard Berlioz himself conduct them in Paris 1839-41 (*Prose* I., VII., VIII.), and had helped him rehearse his two concerts at Dresden in 1843 (*Life* ii, 14). So much for direct aural knowledge. Now for indirect: does Wagner anywhere make mention of Berlioz's *Faust* or *Cellini* beyond this strictly private correspondence? I trow not. Does this letter itself deal with the *music* at all of *Cellini*, i.e. with that part of the work which could not be judged from a libretto or second-hand report? Here is

what it says (in Hueffer's wording): "Candidly speaking, I am sorry to hear that Berlioz thinks of recasting his *Cellini*. If I am not mistaken, this work is more than twelve years old. Has not Berlioz developed in the meantime, so that he might do something quite different? It shows poor confidence in himself to have to return to this earlier work. B. has shown quite correctly where the failure of *Cellini* lies, *viz.*, *in the poem* and in the unnatural position in which the musician was forcibly placed by being expected to disguise by purely musical intentions a want which the poet *alone* could have made good. This *Cellini* Berlioz will never put on its legs. But which of the two after all is of more importance, *Cellini* or Berlioz? Leave the former alone, and help the second." The "B." above is Bülow, and for all purposes of a letter to Liszt, not to *us*, Bülow's reasoned report to the *Neue Zeitschrift* of April 1852 (cf. iii, 335-6*n*) was quite sufficient for Wagner to go upon, since the soundness of Bülow's artistic judgment in general was acknowledged by them both.

Then the reference to *Faust*. It is not absolutely impossible that Wagner should have heard fragments either of the earlier *Huit scènes* or the *Damnation* itself, but for argument's sake let us say he had not: *about* the work he must have heard, or he could not know of its existence. And if about it, why should the general outline of common artistic repute (Wagner still maintaining desultory correspondence with old *Paris* friends of good art-judgment, as we know) not be enough to furnish him with grounds for deploring its scheme in a private letter? Are men like Wagner to be debarred from uttering a remark on hearsay to bosom-friends like Liszt? If a painter heard that an acquaintance had placed a lion's head on an ostrich's body, would it be "impertinence" on his part to call it a *Geschmacklosigkeit*, or offence against taste, in a letter to a brother artist? Would it be a criminal offence for him to say, in confidence, Do try and stop B. following that line?—In any case, Wagner was never so flippantly "impertinent" as to observe that this "opera [!] of Berlioz ends in a manner rather too suggestive of a Christmas card conceived in a nightmare," as Mr Y. has allowed his facetiousness to lure him into doing on a later page of his Book, whilst a previous page confesses to the very sentiment on his own part which he condemns on Wagner's, viz. "When we are tempted to feel annoyed at some of his [Berlioz'] extravagances or banalities we should remember that he had to conquer a new world unaided."

But it is the designation "Faust *Symphony*" that Mr Y. trots out as his *cheval de bataille*. Seated comfortably thereon, he tilts on the right at Richard Wagner, on the left at insignificant me. So be it. Suppose I unseat him? He has heard, no doubt, of a Choral Symphony by Beethoven, and of course is aware that there are vocal solos and choruses in Berlioz's *Roméo* symphony. It is a mere question

of degree, whether we shall extend the term "symphony" to cover the *Damnation de Faust* (as I am credibly informed was done in Paris at the time)—Berlioz himself, at loss for a name for it, calls it "*Légende en 4 actes*" (letter to Liszt, Nov. 6, '52). Perhaps Mr Y. may smile at that thrust; his feet are still firm in the stirrups. But I imagine he will reel a little after my second shock. Oct. 30, 1852, Liszt writes Breitkopf and Haertel: "In a fortnight's time I am expecting M. Berlioz here . . . and on the 21st the Symphonies of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Faust* will be performed, which I proposed to you to publish." My imaginative Mr Y. only loses one stirrup, however, and recovers his seat with the cry, It's all that wretched Wagner's fault; he had put the word into Liszt's innocent head six weeks before.—Alas! my third shock will unseat him completely. Berlioz arrives at Weimar, conducts "les 2 premiers actes" of his *Faust* at one concert with his *Roméo*, and behold—no longer innocent, Liszt writes Prof. Christian Lobe, editor of the *Fliegende Blätter für Musik*, May 1, '53: "The German public is still unacquainted with the greater part of Berlioz' works, and after many enquiries that have been addressed me in the past few months, I believe a German translation of the catalogue might have a good effect; perhaps with division into categories, e.g. OVERTURES, Francs Juges [etc.] . . . SYMPHONIES, 1° Episode, 2° Harold, 3° Romeo et Juliette, 4° Damnation de Faust; VOCAL PIECES, etc., etc."

Should Mr Y. like the name of the armoury whence I drew the lance that finally unhorsed him, I chivalrously place that piece of knowledge at his service, with a counsel to keep his future information "in the language of the vulgar" a little closer up to date: it comes from vol. VIII. of *F. Liszt's Briefe*, published early 1905, some months before the book of Mr Y. As return compliment, I will ask him to let me examine his saddle. Many thanks! Those initials, J. T.—not your own, then?—I turn to p. 270 of Julien Tiersot's *Hector Berlioz etc.*, published 1904 and highly recommended to his clientèle by Mr Y., and there I find: "Tout au moins est il facile de prouver qu'aucune des deux œuvres sur lesquelles portent ses critiques ne lui était connue: ni *Benvenuto*, qu'il n'avait pas vu jouer ou pu lire, ni *la Damnation de Faust*, qu'il qualifie de 'symphonie,' ce qui est assez dire qu'il n'en avait pas la moindre idée. Cela n'empêche pas qu'il applique à ce chef-d'œuvre l'aimable qualification de platitude." So the sole *original* features in Mr Y.'s attack are the stigmatisation of Wagner's remarks as "impertinence," and the innuendo levelled at myself!

With that I leave our Mr Y. to mend his bones as best he can. Stay, tho', I relent. I will give him the address of a surgeon quite after his heart, a gentleman who carries on the most heroic operations in another weekly, once greatly feared, which I now may term the

Ranz des Vaches. Only the other day, this valorous practitioner declared the present *Life* a "terrible affair, which the translator-author or publisher dare not, or at least does not, venture to submit to impartial criticism." Rather a sweeping accusation to lodge against the forty-odd reviewers to whom my work is regularly sent, and among whom I could number personal acquaintances on the fingers of a thumbless hand. But I will tell the *R. d. V.* operator *why* he has received no copies since my volume i. There are two reasons: 1° The elegant tag of his review of that volume ran literally as follows: "I shall use the volumes as they appear to hurl at a Wagnerite gentleman who puts his street-piano under my windows and grinds out the 'Tannhäuser' overture." It struck me a lump of coal, from his landlady's scuttle, would come much cheaper to us both. That is what he perhaps would rank as the frivolous reason; the second is much more serious. 2° Higher up in his review occur these words, "Dreary, fatuous anecdotes, bearing on them the fair bright stamp of utter untruth, are told," and so on. Whether the charge was pointed at myself, or at my friend Herr Glasenapp, it will be obvious to the ordinary reader that this was no reviewer to whom a self-respecting author could ever submit a book again. Should any more of my critics become guilty of equally bad manners—*supposition incroyable*—their supply of my wares will also be cut off *instanter*.

Page 341. DAVISON'S GOD-SPEED TO WAGNER.—Here is the full text of the leader in the *Musical World* of June 30, 1855:—

"Richard Wagner has departed. On Tuesday, 5 o'clock A.M., the morning after the last Philharmonic concert, the representative of the 'Future Art-work' bade adieu to this commercial metropolis,* the

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* Note to the original, "* Since the above was written, we have heard that, although this was Herr Wagner's first intention, he did not really start till Thursday.—Ed. *M. W.*" But that, in turn, is corrected July 7: "HERR RICHARD WAGNER did, after all, quit London the morning after the last Philharmonic Concert, glad, no doubt, to take precipitate leave of a city so lost in the thick and impenetrable darkness of the present, and so deaf to the prophetic voice of 'the Future.'" Directly follows that another paragraph: "M. HECTOR BERLIOZ, the celebrated composer, leaves London to-day for Paris, where his services are demanded as one of the musical judges at the *Exposition*." Then comes a "grand musical entertainment" given by Benedict "at his residence in Manchester Square, in honour of the illustrious composer of the *Huguenots*, on Thursday evening, to which considerably more than 100 fashionable, distinguished, and well-known persons were invited. At dinner, M. Meyerbeer met Mr Charles Dickens, and a select party; and shortly after 11 o'clock the saloons were crowded with visitors. . . . M. Meyerbeer appeared much pleased with the music [all his own, save a pfte interlude] and with the marked attention he received from his courteous host and eminent

inhabitants of which have been hitherto insensible to his preaching. What he may think of musical London we are unable to guess [as he would have nothing to do with its Press]; but, if there be any truth in physiognomy, the 'small man with the intellectual forehead,' as 'Drei Sterner' playfully designates him, must regard us as a community of idiots. Be it so.

'Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise.'

"For our own parts we should prefer a state of perpetual coma to a lively apprehension of Herr Wagner, his doctrines and his music. In speaking of this remarkable man and his works we have, at times, however, been less serious than many may have thought it becoming. Let us, nevertheless, endeavour to absolve ourselves from any suspicion of considering a subject which gravely concerns art from the point of view of ridicule. Our profession of faith is plain and easy.

"We hold that Herr Richard Wagner is *not a musician at all*, but a simple theorist, who has conceived the unhappy idea of aiming a blow at the very existence of music, through *melody*, that element which has won for it the epithet of 'divine.' In condemning independent melody—'*absolute* melody,' to use his own expression—Herr Wagner arraigns the essence of music itself. It is a fact, beyond discussion, that music without melody is impossible, and that melody without phrase and cadence is equally so. And yet this excommunication of pure melody, this utter contempt of tune and rhythmic definition, so notorious in Herr Wagner's *compositions* (we were about to say Herr Wagner's *music*), is also one of the most important points of his system [!], as developed at great length in the book of *Oper und Drame*. His sneers at Rossini, Weber [?], and Auber, because they possessed the gift of melody, are all founded on the stupid and anti-musical assumption that a thing which can be abstracted from an opera—an air or melody, no matter how long or short—should never form part of an opera. It is nonsense to argue that an opera air is *artificial*, since, where there is no artifice there is no art. Opera itself is artificial, drama is artificial, all exemplifications of art are artificial; and if these be admitted we have no right to complain of any of the varieties of artifice which may be employed. What is the use of looking at a landscape of Turner, when you can climb up a hill and see something that—*if nature must be exactly copied* [when did W. say it should?], which we deny—a hundred such men as Turner could not paint? Why waste a glance on one of Titian's Venuses, when by calling on your artist-friend in Newman Street, you may behold the living breathing female nude, reclining before him as a model?

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compatriot, and indeed from every one present—the ladies, who presented a dazzling array of beauty, more especially."

"This cant about nature is all German and all stuff. Art is not nature, and nature is not art. Your 'perfect whole'—if it could possibly be realized, which it cannot—would be nothing better than a 'perfect' bore. Mozart makes his Zerlina sympathise with her bruised husband in an exquisite melody that begins and ends, that may be sung in a concert-room as well as on the stage, and pass for a thing of beauty anywhere. This is *artificial.* Rossini has put in the mouth of his Ninetta a brilliant *aria*, with all kinds of *bravura* passages and graceful ornaments, by which he sought to give musical expression to the joy of the young and innocent village maiden. This, too, is *artificial.* If, however, Zerlina were to approach Masetto, and say, in simple prose: 'Never mind, sweet, I love you—console yourself with that'; Ninetta to rush upon the stage, and scream out, at the top of her voice: 'O dear!—how happy I feel!' in prose as simple, why that would be *natural*, and not artificial. Good. But then Masetto (Polonini) has not *really* been bruised; and Ninetta (Grisi), for all we know, may be very unhappy while feigning to be the exact opposite. The audience must *imagine* the dramatic beating and the dramatic felicity, as they must *imagine* the dramatic stone-statue, in the person of straight Mr Tagliafico. And if all these fables are allowed, the beginning of the artifice is allowed, and the musical treatment cannot be rated for being *artificial*—since the whole is artificial, deliciously artificial; and we must sympathize with the artifice as *truth*, or take no sort of pleasure in the play.

It is clear to us that Herr Wagner wants to upset both opera and drama. Let him then avow it, without all this mystification of words—this tortuous and sophisticated systematising. He says Rossini's opera airs are artificial, and not natural. Granted. No heroine would give vent to her joys or her sorrows in music [in respectable England], much less in florid vocal divisions. But, to put one plain question to Herr Wagner:—would a crowd of nobles, soldiers, peasants, or what not, express themselves continually in *eight-part chorus*, as in *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin?* Is that artificial?—or is that natural? The argument lies in a nutshell. If one artifice may be tolerated, so may the others [?]; and for our parts, we vastly prefer the artificial opera airs, *with* melody, of Rossini and Auber, to the artificial eight-part choruses [which we haven't heard], *without* melody, of Herr Richard Wagner.

"There is another sneer of Herr Richard Wagner, which is equally unjust and foolish. He sneers at the composers above mentioned, and, in short, at every composer except himself, because (as he assumes) their tunes spring from and are corruptions of *the people's melody.* He further sneers at what is called *national* melody, and the *couleur locale.* Being a *communist*, Herr Wagner is desirous of *forcing* the arts into fellowship with his political and social principles

[how little Dn knew of W.'s views!]. He affirms that national melody is unhealthy and unreal [?], being simply the narrow-souled emanation from oppressed peoples, who cannot communicate freely with each other, on account of the trammels imposed upon them by their iniquitous rulers, and whose language and song became thereby stilted and exclusive. What all this means it is, of course, for Herr Wagner to explain. Our own reasoning powers do not help us very far. So well as we can penetrate, however, into the Wagnerian mysteries (which beat the 'Eleusinian' hollow), the end of the 'Future Art Work' is to make music, poetry (poetry, music—we beg pardon), and the other arts, all *so many links in one gigantic scheme of* SOCIALISM. Herr Wagner has set himself a task more difficult than the nine labours of Hercules combined (or the nine giant-symphonies of Beethoven). He is just now cleansing the Augean stables of the musical drama; and meanwhile, with a fierce iconoclasm, is knocking down imaginary images, and levelling temples that are but the creations of his own brain. When he has done this, to his own thorough satisfaction, he will have to grope, disconsolate, among the ruins of his contrivance, like Marius on the crumbled walls of Carthage, and in a brown study begin to reflect—'What next?' For he can build up nothing himself. He can destroy but not reconstruct. He can kill but not give life.

"Now, whoever contemplates with finite wisdom (Herr Wagner must be presumed to be *infinitely wise*,) the scheme of the world and the nature of things—which Porson, when he came home drunk, and could find no rushlight, swore at *—must perceive what an impossible dream is this Utopia of 'the Future.' Let us, however—*argumenti gratiâ*—suppose it to be possible, and turn to some of the promised fruits, in the shape of Wagnerian 'Art-Drama.' What do we find there? So far as music is concerned, nothing better than chaos—'absolute' chaos. The symmetry of form—which the great masters, the musicians, the real 'tone-poets,' have, through successive ages, been enabled to perfect—ignored, or else abandoned; the consistency of keys and their relations—so delightful to the ear, so satisfactory to the mind, and so consonant to *nature*—overthrown, contemned, demolished; the charm of rhythmic measure, the whole art of phrase and cadence—without which music becomes a monotonous and unmeaning succession of sounds, simple, or in combination—destroyed; the true basis of harmony, and the indispensable government of modulation, cast away, for a reckless, wild, extravagant and *demagogic* cacophony, the symbol of profligate libertinage! [*Tannh.* ov.?]

"'Away with the tyranny of tone families!' is a famous motto for one whose ears are too dull to apprehend the exquisite relationship of

* Note to the original, "* 'Confound the nature of things!'"

keys to each other. Are we then to have music in no definite key whatever? Look at *Lohengrin*—'that *best* piece'; hearken to *Lohengrin*—'that *best* piece' [you rather liked it when you partly did]. Your answer is there written and sung. Cast that book upon the waters; it tastes bitter, as the little volume to the prophet. It is poison—*rank poison.*

"Shall a thing so beautiful—of all sounds the sweetest, of all solaces the surest, of all delights the most innocent, of all amusements the most untiring—shall *music* be condemned to the stake and burnt, to satisfy the insatiate craving for destruction of this priest of Dagon? Shall the nurse have no lullaby, to sing the child to sleep—no pretty tune, to rock it up and down—no snatch of melody, to make its little eyes glisten through tears? Heaven forbid! This man, this Wagner, this author of *Tannhäuser*, of *Lohengrin*, and so many other hideous things—and above all, the overture to *Der Fliegende Holländer* [why *didn't* he give that in London?!], the most hideous and detestable of the whole—this preacher of the 'Future,' was born to feed spiders with flies, not to make happy the heart of man with beautiful melody and harmony. What is music to him, or he to music? His rude attacks on melody may be symbolised as matricide. What sings to him in a soft low voice, and should pour oil into that stubborn heart of his [the only one?], he smites and repels. He must be taught, however, when the hollowness of his doctrine is exposed, that 'Di tanti palpiti' is of more worth than his whole artistic life [It now lives chiefly through its parody by the Tailors in his *Meistersinger*]. Who are the men that go about as his apostles? Men like Liszt *—madmen, enemies of music to the knife, who, not born for music, and conscious of their impotence, revenge themselves by endeavouring to annihilate it. These are the preachers of 'the Future,' who hug themselves with Victor Hugo's lying aphorism—*Le laid c'est le beau*—which their every effort tends to illustrate. Turn your eyes, reader, to any one composition that bears the name of Liszt, if you are unlucky enough to have such a thing on your pianoforte, and answer frankly, when you have examined it, if it contains one bar of genuine music. Composition indeed!—*de*composition is the proper word for such hateful *fungi*, which choke up and poison the fertile plains of harmony, threatening the world with drowth—the world that pants 'for the music which is divine,' and can only slake its burning thirst at the silver fountains of genuine flowing *melody*—melody, yes, melody, '*absolute*' melody. [Don't scream!]

We are becoming as hyperbolical as Richard Wagner himself; but

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* This is the exact spot where the martyr Parallax interpolates "the apostle of Weimar and Professor Praeger" in his reproduction of a long string of extracts from the article above (*As I*, pp. 265-6); see also 278*n supra*. Was he hurt at being left out of count in this flaming indictment?

[together with our temper, we have lost our sense of humour, and] really, the indignation we feel at the revelation of his impious theories is so great, that to give a tongue to it in ordinary language is beyond our means. No words can be strong enough to condemn them; no arraignment before the judgment seat of truth too stern and summary; no verdict of condemnation too sweeping and severe. To compromise with such false preachers is a sin. To parley with them mildly would be sheer heathenism. Was the mantle of Elijah impuissant? Were not the waters smitten and divided, so that the faithful might pass over to the true prophets? Not to compare things earthly with things heavenly, has Mendelssohn lived among us in vain? Happily not. It is our hope and belief that the man, whoever he may be, upon whom the mantle of the great author of *Elijah* (the 'mighty poet,' as he was nobly entitled by the Prince Consort [who applauded *Tannh.* ov.]) is destined to fall, that man will smite the waters of error and leave open a dry and easy path to truth, will take away the prophets of Baal, and not sparing one, slay them incontinent with the sword, at the brook which they attempted to defile [What *would* D. have said to R. Strauss's *Heldenleben?* Speech must have failed him.]

"We have cited Porson, in the dark, and this helps us to an apt simile. Wagner's music—take *Lohengrin*, 'that *best* piece' [whose *is* this mystic formula?]—is very much like what 'the nature of things' seemed to the learned Professor, when he was too drunk to find the candle. The candle is wanting. There is a candlestick, but no candle. Or there may be a candle, but there is no match. The rushlight of Franz Liszt, and the 'dips' of Pohl, and Brendel, and Robert Franz, in still unconverted Leipsic, will not do. Lucifer himself could not make them burn fiercely enough to enable ordinary minds to decipher, by their light, the 'future' hieroglyph. We cannot see the 'whole,' of which these demented people rave. All we can make out, by the flaming torch of truth, is an incoherent mass of rubbish, with no more real pretension to be called music than the jangling and clashing of gongs and other uneuphonious instruments, with which the Chinamen, on the brow of a hill, fondly thought to scare away our English 'blue-jackets.' The sailors did not like the music, being used to 'Sally in our Alley' and 'Black-eyed Susan' ('absolute' melodies); but it failed to scare them. Their sole impulse was to exterminate the ugly rascals who were making such a dismal clamour.

"A very intelligent correspondent of *Dwight's Journal of Music* (Boston)—Mr Charles C. Perkins, himself an excellent musician—wrote (from Leipsic) last November, a letter to the editor, about Wagner and his proselytes, which, when we can afford space, we intend to quote, among other papers on the same subject (since every sane demonstration against the absurdity of that very insane gentleman's doctrines is of value now-a-days). We merely refer to it at

present, in order to acquaint our readers with a felicitous title with which Mr Perkins has dubbed the little knot of musical Jesuits, who, while swinging incense before the altars of each other's vanities, are endeavouring to thrust out music from its place among the arts, that it may be a humble minister to their mythic doggrel. He calls them '*The Mutual Adoration Society*.' No fitter name could be found to describe the *coterie*. Only Mr Perkins overlooks one great fact—that, while every one of them adores Wagner, as the first article of their idolatry (we shall not throw the word *religion* into contempt), Herr Wagner adores nobody but himself—not even Liszt, who, with the bellows of his flatulent prose, blew out the author of *Lohengrin*, from a threatening spark, into the aspect and dimensions of a consuming flame. Wagner is Apollo, and these are his satellites. Liszt is the moon, which only shines by reflecting the glory of the bigger orb, and gyrates incessantly round Wagner [and Berlioz]. We would give something to see Richard at Weimar [not more than he himself would], with Liszt, and the others, paying him homage, turning somersaults, and uttering grimaces and gesticulations, like the Dervishes to the music of the chorus (there is a *tune* again; even Beethoven was given to 'absolute' melody) in the *Ruins of Athens*. It would be a ceremony worth witnessing. [Wait one-and-twenty years.]

"M. Fétis (we are reminded by Mr Perkins) insists that the primary object of musical composition is *beauty* [Hanslick echoed?]. M. Fétis is right. The first object in all artistic workmanship is to attain an ideal beauty, a beauty that is not an absolute fact of nature, as may be gathered from the very common observation on seeing a woman of uncommon loveliness:—'her beauty is *ideal*.' This is to say neither more nor less than that it is not a beauty common to nature, but one so rare, that, in order to find a fitting epithet, you are obliged to turn to the poet, who yearns for that which *is not*, and has eyes in his mind, as well as in his head, eyes that are his better, his *poetical* eyes, and which can peer into eternity. Wagner, on the contrary [?]—who, though a mythical dramatist, is no musician and very little of a poet, or at best a poet according to some obscure theory of his own—will have the aim of musical composition, and of all art, to be truth [not 'realism,' though]—which is as much as to say that the object of art is to get back again to whence it started [?]. The only *absolute truth* connected with music is in the primary harmonics, which constitute its elements. But these are for the consideration of acousticians and experimental philosophers; they have nothing whatever to do with what is essentially *music*. That appertains solely to art, and embodies one of the most exquisite contrivances of man to turn the phenomena of nature into a means of enjoyment and recreation to himself. Mozart knew nothing about primary harmonics [any more than W. did], and cared less. A knowledge of the theory of brick-dust is not necessary to the architect who built

Saint Peter's [without a knowledge of the laws of thrust and strain, tho', it could never have been built to endure]. The poet is a liar [?], no matter through what medium he addresses the world. He speaks in a language that is not simple, and being not simple not true. But as a man has a soul, and is not like the beasts, he aspires to more than he sees and hears with his direct organs of sensation. There is for him an ideal as well as a real world; and it is this ideal world which the poet explores for our delight—be he painter, musical composer, sculptor, or architect, no matter what. The closer a man is able to hold communion with the poet, and understand the language of this ideal world, the further he is from the beast, the more worthy of his own soul, and the nearer to the godhead which has stamped him with its image. Now in the ideal world nothing but *beauty* [?] is tolerated; and the *soi-disant* poet who seeks for plain truth, and would use the plain language of men, is simply an ass. At any rate he is *no poet.* This is Wagner's case [!]. Like many other vain and foolish persons, *incapable of creating beauty*—with no organic appreciation of the exhaustless forms and phases which 'the beautiful' may be made to assume, through the agency of the poet, in his eternal but necessarily vain pursuit after ideal perfection—Herr Wagner has got the word TRUTH eternally in his mouth [?—Certainly not in *this* sense], and bellows it out all the louder from the consciousness of his own insignificance. He *cannot* write music himself; and for that reason arraigns it. His contempt [!] for Mendelssohn is simply ludicrous; and we would grant him forty years to produce one melodious phrase like any of those so profusely scattered about in the operas of Rossini, Weber, Auber, and Meyerbeer. 'Opera-melody' indeed! Let the man of 'the Future' try his hand at one, and see what he can make of it. He is as unable to invent genuine tune as pure harmony; and he knows it. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!* Hence 'the books.'

"For the reasons thus given, at some length, we have felt it our duty to warn all who love music and venerate the works of the great masters, who believe that the fine arts are a blessing and not a curse, that they proceed from the Creator and not from Satan, against the preaching and practice of Richard Wagner and his followers—sham prophets, who hoist the banner of 'Truth' [would that one of them had!], as the belligerent powers, at sea, put up false colours in order to deceive and annihilate each other, dangerous enemies to music, the more dangerous from their subtle intellect and uncompromising bigotry, men, themselves degenerate [Nordau, you're badly antedated], envious of those who possess the generating power. Tear away the gaudy mask that hides their features, and you see 'a thing of shreds and patches.' Listen to their wily eloquence, and you find yourself in the coils of rattle-snakes. Fall down and worship them, and you are irretrievably damned [poor 20th century England!]. Göthe foresaw

them when he created Mephistopheles. Avoid, then, the destiny of Faust. Put not your faith in Wagner; or when, full of ardent devotion, you inquire his name, he may answer—'I am LOHENGRIN'—and vanish into the nothingness whence he came.

"These musicians of young Germany are maggots, that quicken from corruption. They have nor bone, nor flesh, nor blood, nor marrow. The end of their being is to prey on the ailing trunk, until it becomes putrid and rotten. Instead of life, they would present us with dust; instead of bread with a stone.

"There is as much difference between *Guillaume Tell* and *Lohengrin* as between the Sun and *ashes*."

Thus ends the strange farrago, in which begged premises and false conclusions are as plentiful as blackberries on a Sussex hedge (before the Brighton tramps have stripped them); and it ends with a most unfortunate comparison: which is the "Sun," which the "*ashes*" to-day, the reader needs no telling. But—it isn't *Robert* or the *Huguenots*, not even the pat *Etoile*, that Davison selects for solar worship; mark that. No Meyerbeerian hireling wrote these pages—the bare suggestion is an affront to English journalism—but a rabid Mendelssohnian-cum-Rossinian, chafed to fury chiefly by the fancied substance of a five-year-old polemic he had never read (*Judenthum*). For all the extravagance of his language, nay, almost on account of it, one can respect the wrath of this abusive Scotsman far more than the pseudo-science of many a modern imitator without a tithe of either his vocabulary or his power. Bad prophet he was, though, and never more fatally forsworn by an "event" than in the following comments on two English Festivals held soon thereafter:—

"People do not go to Hereford or Birmingham, or any where else, simply because the place happens to boast of a railway. There must be something at the farther end of the railway to induce them to take their places at the opposite extremity. That something, too, must be attractive. For instance, we do not believe that the announcement of a series of lectures on the Chinese language, or even a three days' *Musikfest* entirely composed of the productions of the Man of the Future, would occasion any considerable rise in the price of the necessaries of life or the rent of third-floor-backs. No! that which fascinates people, that which—as the mountain of load-stone attracted the iron in Sinbad's ship—draws them from the extreme nooks and corners of these realms, aye, and if report speaks true, even from beyond the seas, is the force of genius—of musical genius, as exemplified in the works of those intellectual giants, Haydn and Händel, Mozart and Mendelssohn, besides a host of others. . . . . Music is not a mere means of passing an idle hour; it is, if properly employed, a great moral engine. Let us only put faith in this notion, and we shall see that it may truly be said of music, as of truth, *magna*

est et prævalebit" (*M. Wd* Sept. 1, 55).—By the time a baby born that day had attained its majority, the world had seen a four-day "*Musikfest*"—as Davison would call it—thrice repeated under circumstances far more startling than had ever entered the brain of honest James when he conceived these lines. It *had* prevailed.

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